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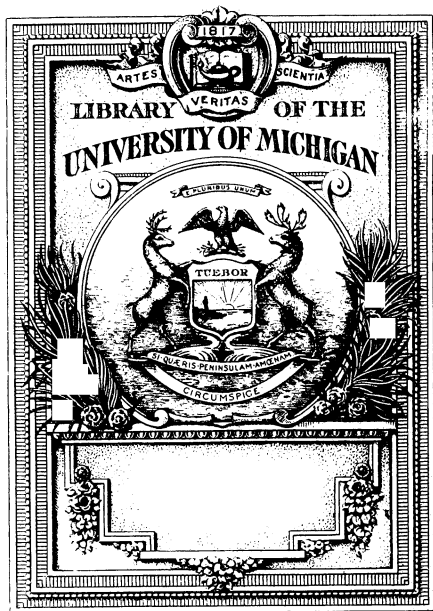
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Samuel Taylor Coleridge.



THE POEMS
OF
SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

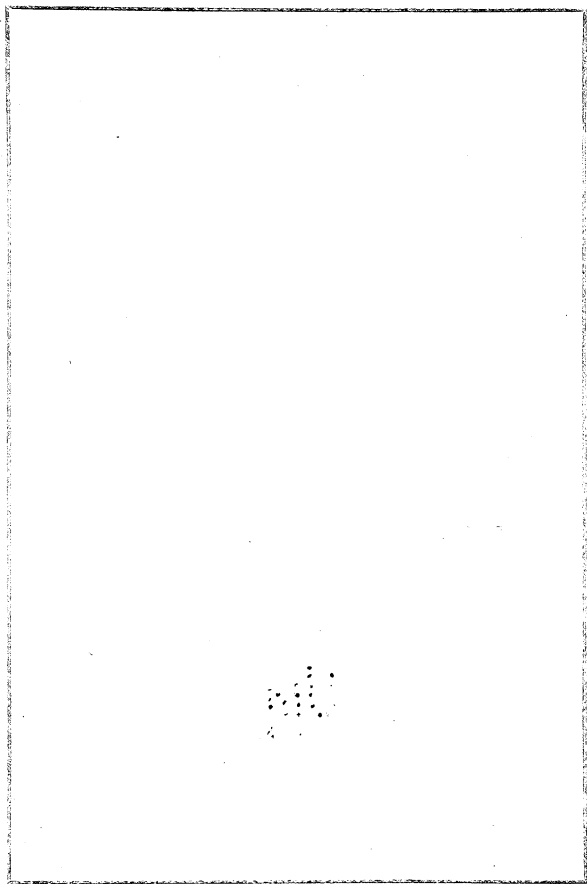
With a Prefatory Notice, Biographical
and Critical.

BY
JOSEPH SKIPSEY.



LONDON:
WALTER SCOTT, 24 Warwick Lane, Paternoster Row,
AND NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.

1887.





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Prefatory Notice.



COME "back into memory, like as thou wert in the dayspring of thy fancies, with hope like a fiery column before thee, the dark pillar not yet named—Samuel Taylor Coleridge, metaphysician, logician, bard." So, on his imagination recurring to the past, cried Charles Lamb, who, of all the men of his age, best knew and appreciated the great bard who sang for us and for all time the "Ancient Marinere," "Christabel," "Kubla Khan," and twenty other of the sweetest, finest, and most marvellous songs that ever flowed from the soul of a bard. Samuel Taylor Coleridge was born at Ottery, St. Mary, in Devonshire, on the 21st October 1772, and was the youngest child of ten

by the same mother, and of thirteen by the same father, who had been twice married. His father, the Rev. John Coleridge, was vicar of Ottery, and head master of a free grammar school, a scholar, a good, simple-minded man, and a day-dreamer ; and in all these respects, and more especially the last, was in verity the image of the son—only the son dreamt such dreams, and gave expression thereunto in such music ! England, by-the-way, has often been denied the honour of being essentially a musical nation, and so far as mere tone or sense-music is concerned, this may to some extent be true ; but then, how do we stand if the question be one purely of word or soul-music ? and if we have not produced such masters in tone melody as Handel, and Haydn, and Mozart, and Beethoven, what nation can boast of so many masters in word melody ?—nay, can the whole of Europe name four to be compared with our Shakespeare, and Milton, and Shelley, and Tennyson ? not to name, perhaps, the chief of all these—even Coleridge. Then, in Coleridge's best pieces we never have sense sacrificed to sound—each word being as essential to the expression of the idea as it is to the requirement of the metre, or the melody itself. Some of his early verses have this character, as those entitled—

TIME—REAL AND IMAGINARY.

AN ALLEGORY.

“ On the wide level of a mountain’s head
(I knew not where, but ’twas some faery place),
Their pinions, ostrich-like, for sails outspread,
Two lovely children ran an endless race ;
 A sister and a brother !
 That far outstripped the other :
Yet ever runs she with reverted face,
And looks and listens for the boy behind ;
 For he, alas ! is blind !
O’er rough and smooth, with even step he pass’d,
And knows not whether he be first or last.”

This poem was written in our poet’s sixteenth year, and when he was a student at Christ’s Hospital, to which he had been sent shortly after his father’s death, through the kindness of Judge Buller, and when he was about ten years of age. At Christ’s Hospital he formed a friendship more precious than rubies, and which was ordained to last through life—and, let us say, through death, for we can never imagine a period will arrive when the souls of Coleridge and Lamb will cease to have the truest and deepest sympathy for each other. Other friendships were added in after years—that of Wordsworth and Southey in particular, and these also were to be long-lived. Shortly after their introduction to each other, Coleridge

and Southey and another friend married three sisters, with the intention of emigrating to America and founding a settlement there—a scheme which was, of course, never carried out, and the thought of which can only excite a smile, for of all men our poet, at any rate, was the least fitted to carry such a thing into effect. This was in the year 1795, when the poet was in his twenty-third year, and about the same time he issued a prose work in conjunction with Southey, which was followed by a periodical—*The Watchman*—the first number of which appeared on the 5th of February 1796. This last named work ran to its ninth number, when, seeing the previous ones “exposed in sundry old iron shops for a penny a-piece,” its projector felt mortified, dropped the undertaking, to find himself indebted to his London publishers for a sum of between eighty and ninety pounds, and for which he would have been thrown into prison had not “a man by no means affluent,” he afterwards wrote, “a dear friend who had attached himself to me from my first arrival at Bristol”—where, or near where, he then lived—“come to the rescue.” Of the unsaleable nature of his writings, and of this *Watchman* in particular, he had an amusing memento one morning from his servant girl; “for happening to arise at an earlier hour than usual, he

observed her putting an extravagant quantity of paper into the grate in order to light the fire, and mildly checked her for her wastefulness ; when, "La, sir," she replied, "why, it is only *The Watchman!*" Only *The Watchman!* and so fit for the fire! Truly, at least so deemed the simple-hearted Nanny, in whose conduct in such matters we have only a reflex in miniature of that of the world, to whom even the products of the rarest genius are but lumber unless they can be turned to a cash account. And Coleridge only found in this case one of the many facts which now forced the perplexing conclusion upon his mind, "that whatever his talents might or might not be in other respects, yet they were not of that sort that could enable" him "to become a popular writer." A most serious reflection this for a poet not born to a fortune, since it simply means that with his special gift, the wherewithal his daily bread must be obtained is not to be had ; and it was from the sting left in his heart by such reflections that he was prompted to address an exhortation to young men, to the effect that above all things they were "never (to) pursue literature as a trade." The advice was excellent as addressed to minds of lofty genius ; for never yet did the product of such genius prove remunerative in a pounds-shillings-and-pence sense, whatever

works of talent with or without genius may have proved. I would not deny that some of our writers whose works are a thorough marketable success have very powerful genius, but I hold that it is rather through the talent with which that genius may be united that we have such a result, and in so far as genius dominates over talent, in so far will the product of a writer be crippled of the said success ; and simply because, that while talent with its cleverness in prudence keeps to beaten tracks, genius with its deeper insight in its wisdom must strike into new ones—must essentially give us new conceptions, and in modes of treatment for which the public for the time being are unprepared. As soon as the general reader, however, is enabled through culture to rise into the plain of thought required for the appreciation of the latter, then nothing can have a more magical effect upon his mind (for there is an inexplicable charm in the product of genius which no mere talent can impart), only a very long time may have to pass before this is effected ; and this at once accounts for a poet's neglect while living, and for his appreciation after he is dead. The immediate reward of the highest genius is thus upon a par with that of utter dulness ; and it is well for the divinely-gifted mind to be made aware of this

at the commencement of his career, so that as much suffering as possible may be avoided, as disappointment and lack of immediate success would otherwise inevitably incur. Coleridge, at quite an early age, was destined to learn this lesson, and the fortitude with which he endured it is not one of the least of this great man's claims to our love and admiration. He was not diverted from his career by this bitter knowledge ; assuredly not, for he felt most powerfully that he had a mission to fulfil, and saw, moreover, and most clearly, that "there's a divinity which shapes our ends, rough hew them how we will," and so, in a calm and meek spirit, set about the task to him appointed ; and he ultimately found, in spite of neglect and detraction, a solace in the Muse, and that "poetry was its own exceeding great reward." *Then* he knew his own value ; and what though his poems were accused of obscurity, as by his own benighted generation they might well be ? "An author is obscure," he replied, "when his conceptions are dim and imperfect, and his language incorrect, or inappropriate, or involved. A poem that abounds in allusions, like 'The Bard' of Gray, or one that impersonates high abstract truths, like Collins' 'Ode on the Poetical Character,' claims not to be popular, but should be acquitted of

obscurity. The deficiency is in the reader ; but this is a charge which every poet, whose imagination is warm and rapid, must expect from his contemporaries. Milton did not escape it, and it was adduced with virulence against Gray and Collins." These words are from the preface to his *Juvenile Poems* (second edition), first printed in 1797. He was then living at Nether Stowey, Somersetshire, to where he had removed a little time before, and where, in the same year, he first met with Wordsworth, who was about two years and a-half his elder. The younger poet was in raptures with the older, whom he had visited at Racedown ; while the older described the younger as "a noticeable man, with large grey eyes, and with a profound forehead, but apparently depressed with the weight of musing fantasy." Could Wordsworth have seen as clearly into the nature of Coleridge as Coleridge saw into that of Wordsworth, a warmer eulogium would have been the result ; but it required some experience to enable the latter to do what the former achieved at a glance. However, the time came when a warmer praise should be given, and Wordsworth then said, "He (Coleridge) is the most wonderful man I have ever known—wonderful for the originality of his mind, and the power he possesses of throwing

out grand central truths, from which might be evolved the most comprehensive systems. He and my sister are the two beings to whom my intellect is most indebted." Great praise this, no doubt, and from such a mind ; but even in this we are given a view of one phase only of this "wonderful mind," and that the least important and precious—the philosophic—while the sublime genius of the poet is not even alluded to. Did Wordsworth, then, estimate the highest qualities of that genius at their true value? I doubt this very much, though he surely held his friend as a poet worthy of deep regard, otherwise he would not have entered into concert with him, as he shortly after the formation of their friendship did, to work out the scheme which afterwards was carried into effect in the production of the *Lyrical Ballads*. Coleridge in after years gave an elaborate account of the origin of these poems, which, I think, must be now regarded in somewhat the same spirit in which most readers accept the celebrated genesis of Edgar Allen Poe's inimitable "Raven." Not that I think that either Coleridge or Wordsworth could or would be guilty of a falsehood—I would not venture to accuse even Poe of such a thing ; but I do think that they, as well as Poe, and all men and women of high imagination, were liable to self-

deception ; and that when we are led to infer that in a poem, or in a series of poems, "the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence in the truth of nature, and the power of giving novelty by the modifying colours of imagination" were suggested by the reflection on "the sudden charm which accidents of light and shade, which moonlight or sunset diffused over a known and familiar landscape," I cannot help thinking that in their speculative rambles they had forgotten what they must have found repeatedly verified in their studies of many of our old ballads. True, such phenomena are "the poetry of nature ;" but I am only confirmed in my supposition that it was rather to the said studies than to observance of such phenomena that we owe the suggestion, when we are farther told "that the thought suggested itself that a series of poems might be composed of two sorts. In the one, the incidents and agents were to be, in part at least, supernatural ; and the excellence aimed at was to consist in the interesting of the affections by the dramatic truth of such emotions as would naturally accompany such situations, supposing them to be real," and that in a second class, subjects were to be chosen from ordinary life, and that "the characters and incidents were to be such as will be found in every

village ;" for have we not in effect here only a recapitulation of what in truth are the characteristics of many of the said old ballads? Of course, when their scheme was carried into practice there was a difference, but the difference in the verses of Coleridge, to whom was assigned the romantic and supernatural part of the work, consisted in his supreme genius for balladry, reproducing in even finer forms the qualities which characterised such "grand old ballads," as "Alison Gross," "The Demon Lover," "Childe Rowland," and others ; while in those of Wordsworth, who had to treat of subjects "chosen from ordinary life," the difference arose out of the substitution of the reflective for the dramatic quality, of which he was deficient, and not in being possessed of a sweeter simplicity and a "truth in nature," other than had already characterised a "Nut Brown Maid" or a "Wini-frida," and others whose writers had evidently deemed the domestic circle as proper a haunt for the Muses as the top of Parnassus itself. Even as renovators of the old tastes and styles in song these two great poets had been preceded by Chatterton and Blake ; and the very subjects and somewhat of the modes of treatment of the latter were such as to have afforded Wordsworth with the best models in his own line had they fallen

into his hands—only there is in the “Songs of Innocence,” with the same childlike simplicity and truth in nature, a more ethereal grace and a sweeter melody than anywhere appears in Wordsworth’s *Lyrical Ballads*. I need not say that my object here is not to bring these ballads into comparison with others, but to show the fallacy of the theory put forth by their authors to account for their origin; and I think this essential, since the impression left on the mind of the reader by such accounts is, that poetry is after all not so divine a thing as most intelligent people hold it to be—is after all only the product of observation and reflection, or the exercise of the reason on recognised facts, instead of being what the wisest of all times have declared it to be—namely, the offspring of internal illumination and inspiration. In other words, the power to produce poetry is a gift and not a thing to be acquired; and though observation and reflection may serve to quicken the poet, perception as to what would or would not be suitable to give to the world and his times, they cannot by any means enlarge that power any more than they can render it subservient and pliant to his behests. Indeed, nothing would serve as a better verification of this old doctrine than a study of the lives and writings of the writers of the *Lyrical Ballads*.

themselves. In the case of Wordsworth, in whom the divine afflatus was seldom so powerful as to cause what he then penned to be so very strongly marked from what he produced in his purely normal condition, the truth of my position may not be so obvious, yet this truth is at once clear when even in his case we contrast his best with his worst verse; but in Coleridge—why just as Iago was nothing if not critical, so just was this divine bard nothing, and at times worse than nothing, if he was not carried up into the seventh heaven of song on the wings of Inspiration. Then to think how often he was carried thither, and the lays he then sung! An “Ancient Marinere,” a “Christabel,” a “Kubla Khan”—what songs!—the splendour of imagination and dramatic power displayed in the first—the sweetness and delicacy of the second and third—and the weird power and the wonderful melody of all the three, and more especially of the last one! “Such music *might be* said before was never made since when of old the sons of morning sang!” And when it has been said that “such melodies were never heard, and such dreams were never dreamed, such speech never spoken, the chief thing remains to be said,” in heartfelt delight writes Mr Swinburne of the two last-named poems,

and what this great poet and critic thus writes has been felt by all who have read and have had the capacity to read them aright. Of the three precious poems named, I may observe there is a conflict of opinion as to which is the most precious. Some critics prefer the "Ancient Marinere;" others, and Swinburne among them, prefer the "Christabel" and "Kubla Khan." My own opinion is with those who prefer the first poem; and when we are told by Mr. Swinburne that it is more conceivable that another man should be capable of writing an "Ancient Marinere" than one capable of writing another "Christabel" or "Kubla Khan," with all respect due to his genius, I cannot but think he errs. Nay, if we must take into account the comparative magnitude and power to charm in conception, as well as degree of perfection in execution, in judging of two or more poems, then I must emphatically say that I know of no poem to be compared with the longer ballad poem,—no poem of the same length, possessed of the same priceless qualities throughout,—no poem at once so unique in conception, so brimful of the most magical suggestiveness, so weird, so wild, yet so rounded and so complete,—no poem whose splendour or sublimity glides so stealthily into the mind of the reader, and with such subtlety takes possession of

the soul and fills it with the most supreme delight,—no poem of which we are so utterly without a prophecy, much less a forerunner ; and no poem of which we have had, in the remotest degree, a blood-relation or legitimate successor—no poem, as a whole, so utterly unmatched and unmatchable as this “Ancient Marinere !” If as much cannot be said of “Christabel,” it is none the less supreme in its ethereal beauty, its honied sweetness, and almost gossamer delicacy of workmanship ;—for though we have in other poems—in “Kilmeny,” for instance, and more than all in “La Dame Sans Merci”—to a certain degree similar perfections, in no other narrative poem of any length have we aught to be compared with it, and the *pièces* named are only twigs in comparison to a full grown tree. It has one fault ; it is unfinished, and our bard had not the power to give the required finish in this case, no more than he had to do the like in that of the wonderful “Kubla Khan”—for wonderful the latter also is, and beyond all price,—though whether it is “perhaps the most wonderful of all poems,” as Mr. Swinburne suggests, is altogether another question. I for one think it is not. I further think that somewhat of the same wonder excited by its perusal may in some measure arise from its being left only a fragment—as paradoxical as this may seem—just

as perhaps feelings of interest are aroused within us at times at the sight of the horned moon, that the moon in its completed glory would fail to awaken—just as the “Paradise Lost” might have left us more filled with wonder had its divine author broken down on the completion of the first four books only, instead of retaining his power, as he did, to go on and complete the twelve—and this inasmuch as the feelings kindled by a perusal of a sublime fragment are left in all their freshness, to be carried into the speculations into which we may be hurried by the imagination as to what the whole would have been of which the glorious portion we have read may be only a part, without risk of the satiation which so often unavoidably results from our contemplation of an embodied whole. Let it be borne in mind that I am here speaking of the power of a poem, or a portion of a poem, to excite wonder only ; and that, of course, in a perfect whole there is a charm arising out of the very unity of its elements, in which wonder and awe may be blended and tempered with a fulfilled expectancy, which no mere fragment or portion of that poem, however sublime, can possess. Nay, the mere fact that a fragment, however it may excite our wonder and otherwise engage our feelings, can only in the end subject us

to a state of tantalization—can only arouse hopes which are never to be gratified—is in itself sufficient cause why it should not be ranked with those starry masterpieces which ever must first command our homage in the Temple of the Muses. But if not to be classed with a “Paradise Lost,” a “Hamlet,” a “Faust,” nor with a “Sensitive Plant,” nor an “Ancient Marinere,” the fragment of “Kubla Khan” is yet, as I have said, beyond measure precious, and “in reading it,” as the great critic above quoted says, “we seem rapt into that paradise revealed to Swedenborg, where music, and colour, and perfume were one, and where you could hear the hues and see the harmonies of heaven.” Of the finest quality also, and evidently from the hand of a great master, is the poem entitled “Love”—perhaps the most popular of all Coleridge’s productions, and a complete poem, though originally intended as part of the “Dark Ladie”—another divine fragment, by the way, and the beauty of which also leaves a pang in the heart of the reader to think it was never allowed to grow into a rounded whole. In yet another fragment, the “Three Graves,” we have a fearful story powerfully suggested, and obviously of a nature not to bear a more complete unfoldment—the half in this case, as in some others, being, if not greater, at

least better than the whole. In "Youth and Age," again, we have a sweeter, and a diviner strain, and so in a lesser degree in "Boccaccio;" while in "Dejection" and in "France" our bard has put forth a legitimate claim to a branch of the same laurel which had circled the brows of Collins and Gray before him, and was to circle the brows of Shelley and Keats after him, as a writer of sublime odes. I shall here only name another of the many beautiful things in Coleridge, and that must, of course, be the so-called political poem, "Fire, Famine, and Slaughter"—the most Shakespearian strain out of Shakespeare, and out of Webster, and out of Goethe, and out of Burns, and out of Old Balladry, that I know. And in none of these—not in Shakespeare himself—have we aught in which a feeling so fearfully fierce finds expression in a way at once so weird and so wild, so consummately devilish in its coolness, so unutterably scathing and swift. It is professedly a political poem, but who ever thinks of politics—of the follies, the blunders, or, if you will, the misdeeds of a Willie Pitt, or any other poor human ruler, during the perusal of this sublime effort of the Muse? Is it not rather as if we were made to witness the castigation of a god by a god?—of an old Norse Evil Loki, for instance, by an Odin?—

from whose fabled Valhalla, by the way, might we not also well imagine the inspiration to have proceeded through which this wonderous poem has been given to man? Be this as it may, it has a smack of the Norse spirit in it as clearly, though more cunningly expressed, than that veritable Norse poem itself, transfused into English by Gray, "The Fatal Sisters,"—as clearly as it is felt in the fearful incantations of certain other Weird Sisters who also only could have had their being from a genius in whose veins ran the magic fire that ran in the veins of those old Northern bards, whose rimes could at once wring the souls out of the bodies of the living and call the dead to life. Of the poems here commented upon, the "Ancient Marinere" was originally published in the *Lyrical Ballad Book* in 1798; but the "Christabel," which was also composed near the close of the century, was only published with the "Kubla Khan" and the "Pains of Sleep" in 1816. The same year also witnessed the issue of nearly all the others in his book entitled *Sibylline Leaves*, which also contained the sublime blank verse poem entitled "A Hymn before Sunrise," one of the most remarkable poems in the collection, but which the Germans assert to be a translation from a poem of one of their own poets, Frederica Brun; while our bard's

apologists insist that the indebtedness is too small for the English poem to be held other than as having been merely suggested by the German one. Another accusation, and in this case a more formidable one, of plagiarism is brought against Coleridge as to the splendid "Hymn to Earth," in hexameters, and which is said to be only an extract from Stolberg's *Hymne an die Erde*, with which, and the "Hymn before Sunrise," he is said to have become acquainted on his visit to Germany—a visit that he was enabled, through the kindness of Josiah and Thomas Wedgwood, to make in 1798-9. These accusations are painful to think of to an admirer and a lover of Coleridge; but the charge of culpability is softened when we reflect—and this again is a painful matter—that this marvellous genius had evidently undergone a sad change through the pernicious use of opium, long before the publication of the *Sibylline Leaves* and the *Later Poems*; and that during the said change a Lethe may have passed through his mind that would sweep from remembrance, among many other things, all clear knowledge at least of the sources from whence such poems may have been derived. His visit to Germany had, assuredly, enabled him to give us a splendid translation of Schiller's "Piccolomini" and "Wallenstein;" yet

I cannot help thinking that this visit ought to be regarded, upon the whole, as an unfortunate one in its results upon his after poetical activity. He had nothing from the Germans to learn as to his divine art, not even from Goethe, had he had the good fortune to have met with the German Apollo—not even the assonantal metre of “Christabel,” over which there has been so much talk, for that he had discovered in his early study of our old ballads, and, perhaps, as Mr. Theo. Watts points out, in the poems of Chatterton. Though he added much to his stock of general information, and acquired a knowledge of German literature, ancient and modern, his naturally voracious appetite for metaphysics more than aught else was pandered to in his intercourse with the philosophers, and an impetus was thus given to his propensity for certain disquisitions, in which many, as well as he, have excelled, to the neglect of that divine gift which at times would enable him to sing such songs as only a very few bards in all time have ever sung. I would not be thought to underrate the philosophical and critical writings and discourses which from time to time during the long years, barren of poetic product, he produced; yet I hold it small thing to have been even the first of Shakespearian critics, in comparison to what it is to be a poet, and such a poet as he was.

By the way, it is remarkable that with all his genius for poetry, and his great powers as a dramatic critic, that he himself was not a great dramatist—that his plays written with an eye to the stage, if not altogether futile, are held by all competent judges to be vastly inferior to the plays of others who had no such poetic power nor dramatic insight as he. In fact, his original dramas are neither an addition to his fame nor to the prized treasures of our dramatic literature, and on this account alone could have no place in the series of which this volume is a unit. A few other pieces of inferior value, and among these the “Religious Musings,” are wholly unworthy of his genius, and are also omitted; but the volume otherwise may be said to contain his complete genuine poems. I have only to add, that about the same time that he issued his *Sibylline Leaves* (1816), being a great sufferer from the effects of a long use of opium, he consigned himself to the care and treatment of Mr. Gillman, surgeon, of Highgate, with whom he lived, and in whose hospitable house he formed a centre of attraction to the most illustrious minds of Great Britain, Europe, and America, by many of whom he was visited, and repeatedly so, up till the time of his death, which occurred on the 25th July 1834, and in the sixty-second year of his age.

Besides his wife, he left two sons and a daughter, all then in the stage of middle-life. The whole of these also had literary talent, the eldest especially so ; but it is the fate of the lesser genius in a family to be always thrust out of sight by the memory of the greater, and that of the author of the "Ancient Marinere" was such that when he died the world may be said to have lost all that could be lost of the greatest poet, if we except Shelley, that England had produced since the days of Milton, and in the domain of pure poetry such a one as has not appeared in the world since.

JOSEPH SKIPSEY.

July 1884.







Coleridge's Poetical Works.

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER.

IN SEVEN PARTS.

PART I.

IT is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.

"By thy long grey beard and glittering
eye,

Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?

The Bridegroom's doors are opened wide,
And I am next of kin;

The guests are met, the feast is set:
May'st hear the merry din."

He holds him with his skinny hand,

"There was a ship," quoth he.

"Hold off! unhand me, grey-beard loon!"

Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

An ancient
Mariner
meeteth
three gallants
bidden to a
wedding feast,
and detaineth
one.

The Wedding-Guest is spell-bound by the eye of the old seafaring man, and constrained to hear his tale.

He holds him with his glittering eye—
The Wedding-Guest stood still,
And listens like a three years' child :
The Mariner hath his will.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone :
He cannot choose but hear ;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

“The ship was cheered, the harbour
Merrily did we drop [cleared,
Below the kirk, below the hill,
Below the light-house top.

The Mariner tells how the ship sailed southward with a good wind and fair weather, till it reached the line.

The sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he !
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea.

Higher and higher every day,
Till over the mast at noon——”
The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon.

The Wedding-Guest heareth the bridal music ; but the Mariner continueth his tale.

The bride hath paced into the hall,
Red as a rose is she ;
Nodding their heads before her goes
The merry minstrelsy.

The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,
Yet he cannot choose but hear ;
And thus spake on that ancient man
The bright-eyed Mariner.

“ And now the storm-blast came, and he The ship drawn
Was tyrannous and strong : by a storm
He struck with his o’ertaking wings, toward the
And chased us south along. south pole.

With sloping masts and dipping prow,
As who pursued with yell and blow
Still treads the shadow of his foe,
And forward bends his head,
The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,
And southward aye we fled.

And now there came both mist and snow,
And it grew wondrous cold :
And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald.

And through the drifts the snowy clifts The land of ice,
Did send a dismal sheen : and of fearful
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken— sounds where
The ice was all between. no living thing
was to be seen.

The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around : [howled,
It cracked and growled, and roared and
Like noises in a swound !

At length did cross an Albatross,
Through the fog it came ;
As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hailed it in God’s name.

It ate the food it ne’er had eat,
And round and round it flew.

Till a great sea-
bird, called the
Albatross, came
through the
snow-fog, and
was received
with great joy
and hospitality.

The ice did split with a thunder-fit ;
The helmsman steered us through !

And lo ! the
Albatross
proveth a bird
of good omen,
and followeth
the ship as it
returned north-
ward through
fog and floating
ice.

And a good south wind sprung up behind ;
The Albatross did follow,
And every day, for food or play,
Came to the mariners' hollo !

In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,
It perched for vespers nine ;
While all the night, through fog-smoke
white
Glimmered the white moon-shine."

The ancient
Mariner inhospitably killeth
the pious bird
of good omen.

"God save thee, ancient Mariner,
From the fiends, that plague thee thus !—
Why look'st thou so ?"—"With my cross-
bow
I shot the Albatross.

PART II.

THE Sun now rose upon the right :
Out of the sea came he,
Still hid in mist, and on the left
Went down into the sea.

And the good south wind still blew behind,
But no sweet bird did follow,
Nor any day for food or play
Came to the mariners' hollo !

And I had done a hellish thing,
And it would work 'em woe :
For all averred, I had killed the bird
That made the breeze to blow.
Ah wretch ! said they, the bird to slay,
That made the breeze to blow !

Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,
The glorious Sun uprist :
Then all averred, I had killed the bird
That brought the fog and mist.
'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay,
That bring the fog and mist.

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free ;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt
down,

'Twas sad as sad could be ;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea !

All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody Sun, at noon,
Right above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the Moon.

Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion ;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

His shipmates
cry out against
the ancient
Mariner, for
killing the bird
of good luck.
But when the
fog cleared off,
they justify the
same, and
thus make
themselves
accomplices in
the crime.

The fair breeze
continues ; the
ship enters the
Pacific Ocean,
and sails north-
ward, even till
it reaches the
Line.

The ship hath
been suddenly
becalmed.

And the Albatross begins to be avenged.

Water, water, everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink ;
Water, water, everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink.

The very deep did rot : O Christ !
That ever this should be !
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea.

About, about, in reel and rout
The death-fires danced at night ;
The water, like a witch's oils,
Burnt green, and blue, and white.

A Spirit followed them ;
one of the invisible inhabitants of this planet, neither

And some in dreams assured were
Of the Spirit that plagued us so ;
Nine fathom deep he had followed us
From the land of mist and snow.

departed souls nor angels ; concerning whom the learned Jew, Josephus, and the Platonic Constantinopolitan, Michael Psellus, may be consulted. They are very numerous, and there is no climate or element without one or more.

And every tongue, through utter drought,
Was withered at the root ;
We could not speak, no more than if
We had been choked with soot.

The shipmates, in their sore distress, would fain throw the whole guilt on the ancient Mariner : in sign whereof they hang the dead sea-bird round his neck.

Ah ! well a-day ! what evil looks
Had I from old and young !
Instead of the cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung.

in sign whereof they hang the dead sea-bird round his neck.

PART III.

THERE passed a weary time. Each throat
Was parched, and glazed each eye.
A weary time ! a weary time !
How glazed each weary eye,
When looking westward, I beheld
A something in the sky.

The ancient
Mariner be-
holdeth a
sign in the
element afar
off.

At first it seemed a little speck,
And then it seemed a mist ;
It moved and moved, and took at last
A certain shape, I wist.

A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist !
And still it neared and neared :
As if it dodged a water-sprite,
It plunged, and tacked, and veered.

With throats unslaked, with black lips
baked,
We could nor laugh nor wail ;
Through utter drought all dumb we stood !
I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,
And cried, A sail ! a sail !

At its nearer
approach, it
seemeth him
to be a ship ;
and at a dear
ransom he
freeth his
speech from
the bonds of
thirst.

With throats unslaked, with black lips
baked,
Agape they heard me call :
Gramercy ! they for joy did grin,
And all at once their breath drew in,
As they were drinking all.

A flash of
joy ;

And horror
follows. For
can it be a
ship that
comes on-
ward without
wind or tide?

See ! see ! (I cried) she tacks no more !
Hither to work us weal—
Without a breeze, without a tide,
She steadies with upright keel !

The western wave was all aflame,
The day was well-nigh done !
Almost upon the western wave
Rested the broad, bright Sun ;
When that strange shape drove suddenly
Betwixt us and the Sun.

It seemeth
him but the
skeleton of a
ship.

And straight the Sun was flecked with bars
(Heaven's Mother send us grace !)
As if through a dungeon-grate he peered
With broad and burning face.

Alas ! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)
How fast she nears and nears !
Are those her sails that glance in the Sun,
Like restless gossameres ?

And its ribs
are seen as
bars on the
face of the
setting Sun.
The Spectre-
Woman and
her Death-
mate, and no
other on
board the
skeleton ship.
Like vessel
like crew !

Are those her ribs through which the Sun
Did peer, as through a grate ?
And is that Woman all her crew ?
Is that a Death ? and are there two ?
Is Death that woman's mate ?

Her lips were red, her looks were free,
Her locks were yellow as gold :
Her skin was as white as leprosy,
The Night-mare Life-in-Death was she,
Who thicks man's blood with cold.

The naked hulk alongside came,
And the twain were casting dice;
'The game is done ! I've won ! I've won !'
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

Death and
Life-in-Death
have diced for
the ship's crew,
and she (the
latter) winneth
the ancient
Mariner.

The Sun's rim dips ; the stars rush out :
At one stride comes the dark ;
With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,
Off shot the spectre-bark.

No twilight
within the
courts of the
Sun.

We listened and looked sideways up !
Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
My life-blood seemed to sip !
The stars were dim, and thick the night,
The steersman's face by his lamp gleamed
white ;

From the sails the dew did drip—
Till cloam above the eastern bar
The horned Moon, with one bright star
Within the nether tip.

At the rising of
the Moon.

One after one, by the star-dogged Moon,
Too quick for groan or sigh,
Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,
And cursed me with his eye.

One after
another,

Four times fifty living men
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan),
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
They dropped down one by one.

His shipmates
drop down
dead.

But Life-in-
Death begins
her work on the
ancient Ma-
riner.

The souls did from their bodies fly—
They fled to bliss or woe !
And every soul, it passed me by,
Like the whizz of my cross-bow ! ”

PART IV.

The Wedding-
Guest feareth
that a Spirit is
talking to him.

“ I FEAR thee, ancient Mariner !
I fear thy skinny hand !
And thou art long, and lank, and brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand.

But the ancient
Mariner assur-
eth him of his
bodily life, and
proceedeth to
relate his horri-
ble penance.

I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
And thy skinny hand, so brown.”—
“ Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-Guest !
This body dropt not down.

Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on the wide, wide sea !
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

He despiseth
the creatures
of the calm.

The many men, so beautiful !
And they all dead did lie :
And a thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on ; and so did I.

And envieth
that they should
live, and so
many lie dead.

I looked upon the rotting sea,
And drew my eyes away ;
I looked upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay.

I looked to heaven, and tried to pray ;
But or ever a prayer had gusht,
A wicked whisper came, and made
My heart as dry as dust.

I closed my lids, and kept them close,
And the balls like pulses beat ;
For the sky and the sea, and the sea and
the sky
Lay like a load on my weary eye,
And the dead were at my feet.

The cold sweat melted from their limbs,
Nor rot nor reek did they :
The look with which they looked on me
Had never passed away.

But the curse
liveth for him
in the eye of the
dead men.

An orphan's curse would drag to hell
A spirit from on high ;
But oh ! more horrible than that
Is the curse in a dead man's eye !
Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,
And yet I could not die.

The moving moon went up the sky,
And nowhere did abide ;
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside—

In his loneli-
ness and
fixedness he
yearneth to-
wards the
journeying

Moon, and the stars that still sojourn, yet still move onward ;
and everywhere the blue sky belongs to them, and is their
appointed rest, and their native country, and their own natural
homes, which they enter unannounced, as lords that are
certainly expected, and yet there is a silent joy at their arrival.

Her beams bemooked the sultry main,
Like April hoar-frost spread ;
But where the ship's huge shadow lay,
The charmed water burned away
A still and awful red.

By the light
of the Moon
he beholdeth
God's crea-
tures of the
great calm.

Beyond the shadow of the ship,
I watched the water-snakes :
They moved in tracks of shining white,
And when they reared, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire :
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coiled and swam ; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.

Their beauty
and their
happiness.

He blesseth
them in his
heart.

O happy living things ! no tongue
Their beauty might declare :
A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware :
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I blessed them unaware.

The spell be-
gins to break.

The selfsame moment I could pray ;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.

PART V.

O SLEEP ! it is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole !
To Mary queen the praise be given !
She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven,
That slid into my soul.

The silly buckets on the deck,
That had so long remained,
I dreamt that they were filled with dew ;
And when I awoke, it rained.

By grace of
the holy
Mother, the
ancient Mariner
is refreshed
with rain.

My lips were wet, my throat was cold,
My garments all were dank ;
Sure I had drunken in my dreams,
And still my body drank.

I moved, and could not feel my limbs :
I was so light—almost
I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blessed ghost.

And soon I heard a roaring wind :
It did not come anear ;
But with its sound it shook the sails,
That were so thin and sere.

He heareth
sounds and
seeth strange
sights and
commotions
in the sky
and the ele-
ment

The upper air burst into life !
And a hundred fire-flags sheen,
To and fro they were hurried about !
And to and fro, and in and out,
The wan stars danced between.

And the coming wind did roar more loud,
And the sails did sigh like sedge ;
And the rain poured down from one black
cloud ;
The Moon was at its edge.

The thick black cloud was cleft, and still
The Moon was at its side ;
Like waters shot from some high crag,
The lightning fell with never a jag,
A river steep and wide.

The bodies of The loud wind never reached the ship,
the ship's
crew are in- Yet now the ship moved on !
spired, and the Beneath the lightning and the Moon
ship moves on. The dead men gave a groan.

They groaned, they stirred, they all
uprose,
Nor spake, nor moved their eyes ;
It had been strange, even in a dream,
To have seen those dead men rise.

The helmsman steered, the ship moved on ;
Yet never a breeze up blew ;
The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,
Where they were wont to do ;
They raised their limbs like lifeless tools—
We were a ghastly crew.

The body of my brother's son
Stood by me knee to knee :
The body and I pulled at one rope,
But he said nought to me."

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner !"
"Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest :
'Twas not those souls that fled in pain,
Which to their corpses came again,
But a troop of Spirits blest :

But not by
the souls of
the men, not by
demons of earth
or middle air,
but by a blessed
troop of angelic
spirits, sent
down by the
invocation of
the guardian
saint,

For when it dawned—they dropped their
arms,
And clustered round the mast ;
Sweet sounds rose slowly through their
mouths,
And from their bodies passed.

Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
Then darted to the Sun ;
Slowly the sounds came back again,
Now mixed, now one by one.

Sometimes a-dropping from the sky
I heard the sky-lark sing ;
Sometimes all little birds that are,
How they seemed to fill the sea and air
With their sweet jargoning !

And now 'twas like all instruments,
Now like a lonely flute ;
And now it is an angel's song,
That makes the heavens be mute.

It ceased ; yet still the sails made on
A pleasant noise till noon,
A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June,

That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.

Till noon we quietly sailed on,
Yet never a breeze did breathe :
Slowly and smoothly went the ship,
Moved onward from beneath.

The lonesome
Spirit from the
south pole
carries on the
ship as far as
the Line, in
obedience to
the angelic
troop, but still
requireth
vengeance.

Under the keel nine fathoms deep,
From the land of mist and snow,
The spirit slid : and it was he
That made the ship to go.
The sails at noon left off their tune,
And the ship stood still also.

The Sun, right up above the mast,
Had fixed her to the ocean :
But in a minute she 'gan stir,
With a short uneasy motion—
Backwards and forwards half her length
With a short uneasy motion.

Then like a pawing horse let go,
She made a sudden bound :
It flung the blood into my head,
And I fell down in a swoond.

The Polar
Spirit's fellow-
demons, the
invisible inhabi-
tants of the
element, take

How long in that same fit I lay,
I have not to declare ;
But ere my living life returned,
I heard, and in my soul discerned
Two voices in the air.

'Is it he?' quoth one, 'is this the man?
By him who died on cross,
With his cruel bow he laid full low
The harmless Albatross.

The Spirit who bideth by himself
In the land of mist and snow,
He loved the bird that loved the man
Who shot him with his bow.'

The other was a softer voice,
As soft as honey-dew:
Quoth he, 'The man hath penance done,
And penance more will do.'

part in his
wrong; and
two of them
relate, one to
the other, that
penance long
and heavy for
the ancient
Mariner hath
been accorded
to the Polar
Spirit, who
returneth
southward.

PART VI.

FIRST VOICE.

'But tell me, tell me! speak again,
Thy soft response renewing—
What makes that ship drive on so fast?
What is the ocean doing?'

SECOND VOICE.

'Still as a slave before his lord.
The ocean hath no blast;
His great bright eye most silently
Up to the Moon is cast—

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If he may know which way to go ;
 For she guides him smooth or grim.
 See, brother, see ! how graciously
 She looketh down on him.'

FIRST VOICE.

The Mariner hath been cast
 into a trance ;
 for the angelic
 power causeth
 the vessel to
 drive northward
 faster than
 human life
 could endure.

' But why drives on that ship so fast,
 Without or wave or wind ?'

SECOND VOICE.

The air is cut away before,
 And closes from behind.

Fly, brother, fly ! more high, more high !
 Or we shall be belated :
 For slow and slow that ship will go,
 When the Mariner's trance is abated.'

The supernatural motion
 is retarded ; the
 Mariner awakes
 and his penance
 begins anew.

I woke, and we were sailing on
 As in a gentle weather :
 'Twas night, calm night, the Moon was
 high ;
 The dead men stood together.

All stood together on the deck,
 For a charnel-dungeon fitter :
 All fixed on me their stony eyes,
 That in the Moon did glitter.

The pang, the curse, with which they died,
 Had never passed away :
 I could not draw my eyes from theirs,
 Nor turn them up to pray.

And now this spell was snapt : once more The curse is
I viewed the ocean green, finally expiated.
And looked far forth, yet little saw
Of what had else been seen—

Like one that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round, walks on,
And turns no more his head ;
Because he knows, a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.

But soon there breathed a wind on me,
Nor sound nor motion made :
Its path was not upon the sea,
In ripple or in shade.

It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek
Like a meadow-gale of spring—
It mingled strangely with my fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship,
Yet she sailed softly too :
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze—
On me alone it blew.

Oh ! dream of joy ! is this indeed
The lighthouse top I see ?
Is this the hill ? is this the kirk ?
Is this mine own countree ?

We drifted o'er the harbour-bar,
And I with sobs did pray—

And the ancient
Mariner behold-
eth his native
country.

O let me be awake, my God !
Or let me sleep alway.

The harbour-bay was clear as glass,
So smoothly it was strewn !
And on the bay the moonlight lay,
And the shadow of the Moon.

The rock shone bright, the kirk no less
That stands above the rock :
The moonlight steeped in silentness
The steady weathercock.

And the bay was white with silent light
Till rising from the same,
The angelic spirits leave the dead bodies,
Full many shapes, that shadows were,
In crimson colours came.

And appear in their own forms of light,
A little distance from the prow
Those crimson shadows were :
I turned my eyes upon the deck—
Oh, Christ ! what saw I there !

Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,
And, by the holy rood !
A man all light, a seraph-man,
On every corse there stood.

This seraph-band, each waved his hand :
It was a heavenly sight !
They stood as signals to the land,
Each one a lovely light ;

This seraph-band, each waved his hand,
No voice did they impart—
No voice ; but oh ! the silence sank
Like music on my heart.

But soon I heard the dash of oars,
I heard the Pilot's cheer ;
My head was turned perforce away,
And I saw a boat appear.

The Pilot and the Pilot's boy,
I heard them coming fast :
Dear Lord in Heaven ! it was a joy
The dead men could not blast.

I saw a third—I heard his voice :
It is the Hermit good !
He singeth loud his godly hymns
That he makes in the wood.
He'll shrive my soul, he'll wash away
The Albatross's blood.

PART VII.

THIS hermit good lives in that wood
Which slopes down to the sea.
How loudly his sweet voice he rears !
He loves to talk with mariners
That come from a far countree.

The Hermit of
the wood.

He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve—
He hath a cushion plump :
It is the moss that wholly hides
The rotted old oak-stump.

The skiff-boat neared : I heard them talk,
' Why, this is strange, I trow !
Where are those lights so many and fair,
That signal made but now ? '

Approacheth
the ship with
wonder,

' Strange, by my faith ! ' the Hermit said—
' And they answered not our cheer !
The planks looked warped ! and see those
sails,
How thin they are and sere !
I never saw aught like to them,
Unless perchance it were

Brown skeletons of leaves that lag
My forest-brook along ;
When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow,
And the owl whoops to the wolf below,
That eats the she-wolf's young.'

' Dear Lord ! it hath a fiendish look—
(The Pilot made reply)
I am a-feared '—' Push on, push on ! '
Said the Hermit cheerily.

The boat came closer to the ship,
But I nor spake nor stirred ;
The boat came close beneath the ship,
And straight a sound was heard.

Under the water it rumbled on,
Still louder and more dread :
It reached the ship, it split the bay ;
The ship went down like lead.

The ship
suddenly
sinketh.

Stunned by that loud and dreadful sound, The ancient
Which sky and ocean smote, Mariner is
Like one that hath been seven days saved in the
drowned Pilot's boat.

My body lay afloat ;
But swift as dreams, myself I found
Within the Pilot's boat.

Upon the whirl, where sank the ship
The boat spun round and round ;
And all was still, save that the hill
Was telling of the sound.

I moved my lips—the Pilot shrieked
And fell down in a fit ;
The holy Hermit raised his eyes,
And prayed where he did sit.

I took the oars : the Pilot's boy,
Who now doth crazy go,
Laughed loud and long, and all the while
His eyes went to and fro.
'Ha ! ha !' quoth he, 'full plain I see,
The Devil knows how to row.'

And now, all in my own countree,
I stood on the firm land !
The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,
And scarcely he could stand.

The ancient
Mariner
earnestly
entreateth the
Hermit to
shrieve him ;
and the penance
of life falls on
him.

O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man !
The Hermit crossed his brow.
'Say quick,' quoth he, 'I bid thee say—
What manner of man art thou ?'

Forthwith this frame of mind was wrenched
With a woful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale ;
And then it left me free.

And ever and
anon through-
out his future
life an agony
constraineth
him to travel
from land to
land.

Since then, at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns :
And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns.

I pass, like night, from land to land ;
I have strange power of speech ;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me :
To him my tale I teach.

What loud uproar bursts from that door !
The wedding-guests are there :
But in the garden-bower the bride
And bride-maids singing are :
And hark the little vesper bell,
Which biddeth me to prayer !

O Wedding-Guest ! this soul hath been
Alone on a wide, wide sea :
So lonely 'twas, that God Himself
Scarce seemed there to be.

O sweeter than the marriage-feast,
'Tis sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company !—

To walk together to the kirk,
And all together pray,
While each to his great Father bends,
Old men, and babes, and loving friends,
And youths and maidens gay !

Farewell, farewell, but this I tell
To thee, thou Wedding-Guest !
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man, and bird, and beast.

He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small ;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar,
Is gone : and now the Wedding-Guest
Turned from the bridegroom's door.

He went like one that hath been stunned,
And is of sense forlorn :
A sadder and a wiser man
He rose the morrow morn.

And to teach
by his own
example
love and re-
verence to all
things that
God made
and loveth.

CHRISTABEL.

PART I.

TIS the middle of night by the castle clock,
And the owls have awakened the crowing
cock ;
Tu—whit !——Tu—whoo !
And hark, again ! the crowing cock,
How drowsily it crew.

Sir Leoline, the Baron rich,
Hath a toothless mastiff bitch ;
From her kennel beneath the rock
She maketh answer to the clock.
Four for the quarters, and twelve for the hour ;
Ever and aye, by shine and shower,
Sixteen short howls, not over loud ;
Some say, she sees my lady's shroud.

Is the night chilly and dark ?
The night is chilly but not dark.
The thin gray cloud is spread on high,
It covers but not hides the sky.
The moon is behind, and at the full ;
And yet she looks both small and dull.
The night is chill, the cloud is gray :
'Tis a month before the month of May,
And the Spring comes slowly up this way.

The lovely lady, Christabel,
Whom her father loves so well,
What makes her in the wood so late,
A furlong from the castle gate?
She had dreams all yesternight
Of her own betrothed knight;
And she in the midnight wood will pray
For the weal of her lover that's far away.

She stole along, she nothing spoke,
The sighs she heaved were soft and low,
And naught was green upon the oak,
But moss and rarest mistletoe;
She kneels beneath the huge oak tree,
And in silence prayeth she.

The lady sprang up suddenly,
The lovely lady, Christabel!
It moaned as near, as near can be,
But what it is, she cannot tell.—
On the other side it seems to be,
Of the huge broad-breasted, old oak tree.

The night is chill; the forest bare;
Is it the wind that moaneth bleak?
There is not wind enough in the air
To move away the ringlet curl
From the lovely lady's cheek—
There is not wind enough to twirl
The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
That dances as often as dance it can,
Hanging so light, and hanging so high,
On the topmast twig that looks up at the sky.

Hush, beating heart of Christabel !
Jesu, Maria, shield her well !
She folded her arms beneath her cloak,
And stole to the other side of the oak.
What sees she there ?

There she sees a damsel bright,
Drest in a silken robe of white,
That shadowy in the moonlight shone :
The neck that made that white robe wan,
Her stately neck, and arms were bare ;
Her blue-veined feet unsandal'd were,
And wildly glittered here and there
The gems entangled in her hair.
I guess, 'twas frightful there to see
A lady so richly clad as she—
Beautiful exceedingly !

Mary mother, save me now !
(Said Christabel) And who art thou ?

The lady ~~strange~~ made answer meet,
And her voice was faint and sweet—
Have pity on my sore distress,
I scarce can speak for weariness :
Stretch forth thy hand, and have no fear !
Said Christabel, How camest thou here ?
And the lady, whose voice was faint and sweet,
Did thus pursue her answer meet :

My sire is of a noble line,
And my name is Geraldine :
Five warriors seized me yesternorn,
Me, even me, a maid forlorn :

They choked my cries with force and fright,
And tied me on a palfrey white.
The palfrey was as fleet as wind,
And they rode furiously behind.
They spurred amain, their steeds were white,
And once we crossed the shade of night.
As sure as Heaven shall rescue me,
I have no thought what men they be ;
Nor do I know how long it is
(For I have lain entranced I wis)
Since one, the tallest of the five,
Took me from the palfrey's back,
A weary woman, scarce alive.
Some muttered words his comrades spoke :
He placed me underneath this oak ;
He swore they would return with haste ;
Whither they went I cannot tell—
I thought I heard, some minutes past,
Sounds as of a castle bell.
Stretch forth thy hand (thus ended she),
And help a wretched maid to flee.

Then Christabel stretched forth her hand
And comforted fair Geraldine :
O well, bright dame ! may you command
The service of Sir Leoline ;
And gladly our stout chivalry
Will he send forth and friends withal
To guide and guard you safe and free
Home to your noble father's hall.

She rose : and forth with steps they passed
That strove to be, and were not, fast.
Her gracious stars the lady blest,

And thus spake on sweet Christabel :
All our household are at rest,
The hall as silent as the cell ;
Sir Leoline is weak in health,
And may not well awakened be,
But we will move as if in stealth,
And I beseech your courtesy,
This night, to share your couch with me.

They crossed the moat, and Christabel
Took the key that fitted well ;
A little door she opened straight,
All in the middle of the gate ;
The gate that was ironed within and without,
Where an army in battle array had marched out.
The lady sank, belike through pain,
And Christabel with might and main
Lifted her up, a weary weight,
Over the threshold of the gate :
Then the lady rose again,
And moved, as she were not in pain.

So free from danger, free from fear
They crossed the court : right glad they were.
And Christabel devoutly cried
To the lady by her side ;
Praise we the Virgin all divine
Who hath rescued thee from thy distress !
Alas, alas ! said Geraldine,
I cannot speak for weariness.
So free from danger, free from fear,
They crossed the court : right glad they were.

Outside her kennel the mastiff old
Lay fast asleep, in moonshine cold.
The mastiff old did not awake,
Yet she an angry moan did make !
And what can ail the mastiff bitch ?
Never till now she uttered yell
Beneath the eye of Christabel.
Perhaps it is the owlet's scritch :
For what can ail the mastiff bitch ?

They passed the hall, that echoes still,
Pass as lightly as you will !
The brands were flat, the brands were dying,
Amid their own white ashes lying ;
But when the lady passed, there came
A tongue of light, a fit of flame ;
And Christabel saw the lady's eye,
And nothing else saw she thereby,
Save the boss of the shield of Sir Leoline tall,
Which hung in a murky old niche in the wall.
O softly tread, said Christabel,
My father seldom sleepeth well.

Sweet Christabel her feet doth bare,
And, jealous of the listening air,
They steal their way from stair to stair,
Now in glimmer, and now in gloom,
And now they pass the Baron's room,
As still as death with stifled breath !
And now have reached her chamber door ;
And now doth Geraldine press down
The rushes of the chamber floor.

The moon shines dim in the open air,
And not a moonbeam enters here.
But they without its light can see
The chamber carved so curiously,
Carved with figures strange and sweet,
All made out of the carver's brain,
For a lady's chamber meet :
The lamp with twofold silver chain
Is fastened to an angel's feet.
The silver lamp burns dead and dim ;
But Christabel the lamp will trim.
She trimmed the lamp, and made it bright,
And left it swinging to and fro,
While Geraldine, in wretched plight,
Sank down upon the floor below.

O weary lady, Geraldine,
I pray you, drink this cordial wine !
It is a wine of virtuous powers ;
My mother made it of wild flowers.

And will your mother pity me,
Who am a maiden most forlorn ?
Christabel answered—Woe is me !
She died the hour that I was born.
I have heard the gray-haired friar tell,
How on her death-bed she did say,
That she should hear the castle-bell
Strike twelve upon my wedding-day.
O mother dear ! that thou wert here !
I would, said Geraldine, she were !
But soon with altered voice, said she—
"Off, wandering mother ! Peak and pine !
I have power to bid thee flee."

Alas ! what ails poor Geraldine ?
Why stares she with unsettled eye ?
Can she the bodiless dead espy ?
And why with hollow voice cries she,
" Off, woman, off ! this hour is mine—
Though thou her guardian spirit be,
Off, woman, off ! 'tis given to me."

Then Christabel knelt by the lady's side,
And raised to heaven her eyes so blue—
Alas ! said she, this ghastly ride—
Dear lady ! it hath wildered you !
The lady wiped her moist cold brow,
And faintly said, "'Tis over now !"

Again the wild-flower wine she drank ;
Her fair large eyes 'gan glitter bright,
And from the floor whereon she sank,
The lofty lady stood upright ;
She was most beautiful to see,
Like a lady of a far countree.

And thus the lofty lady spake—
All they, who live in the upper sky,
Do love you, holy Christabel !
And you love them, and for their sake
And for the good which me befell,
Even I in my degree will try,
Fair maiden, to requite you well.
But now unrobe yourself ; for I
Must pray, ere yet in bed I lie.

Quoth Christabel, so let it be
And as the lady bade, did she.

Her gentle limbs did she undress,
And lay down in her loveliness.

But through her brain of weal and woe
So many thoughts moved to and fro,
That vain it were her lids to close ;
So half-way from the bed she rose
And on her elbow did recline
To look at the lady Geraldine.

Beneath the lamp the lady bowed,
And slowly rolled her eyes around ;
Then drawing in her breath aloud
Like one that shuddered, she unbound
The cincture from beneath her breast :
Her silken robe, and inner vest,
Dropt to her feet, and full in view,
Behold ! her bosom and half her side-----
A sight to dream of, not to tell !
O shield her ! shield sweet Christabel !

Yet Geraldine nor speaks nor stirs ;
Ah ! what a stricken look was hers !
Deep from within she seems half-way
To lift some weight with sick assay,
And eyes the maid and seeks delay ;
Then suddenly as one defied
Collects herself in scorn and pride,
And lay down by the maiden's side !--
And in her arms the maid she took,
Ah well-a-day !
And with low voice and doleful look
These words did say :

In the touch of this bosom there worketh a spell,
Which is lord of thy utterance, Christabel !
Thou knowest to-night, and wilt know to-morrow
This mark of my shame, this seal of my sorrow ;
 But vainly thou warrest,
 For this is alone in
 Thy power to declare,
 That in the dim forest
 Thou heard'st a low moaning,
And found'st a bright lady, surpassingly fair :
And didst bring her home with thee in love and in
 charity,
To shield her and shelter her from the damp air.

THE CONCLUSION TO PART I.

It was a lovely sight to see
The lady Christabel, when she
Was praying at the old oak tree.
 Amid the jagged shadows
 Of mossy leafless boughs,
 Kneeling in the moonlight,
 To make her gentle vows ;
Her slender palms together prest,
Heaving sometimes on her breast ;
Her face resigned to bliss or bale—
Her face, oh, call it fair, not pale,
And both blue eyes more bright than clear
Each about to have a tear.

 With open eyes (ah woe is me !)
Asleep, and dreaming fearfully,

Fearfully dreaming, yet I wis,
Dreaming that alone, which is—
O sorrow and shame ! Can this be she,
The lady, who knelt at the old oak tree !
And lo ! the worker of these harms,
That holds the maiden in her arms,
Seems to slumber still and mild,
As a mother with her child.

A star hath set, a star hath risen,
O Geraldine ! since arms of thine
Have been the lovely lady's prison.
O Geraldine ! one hour was thine—
Thou'st had thy will ! By tairn and rill,
The night-birds all that hour were still.
But now they are jubilant anew,
From cliff and tower, tu—whoo ! tu—whoo !
Tu—whoo ! tu—whoo ! from wood and fell !
And see ! the lady Christabel
Gathers herself from out her trance ;
Her limbs relax, her countenance
Grows sad and soft ; the smooth thin lids
Close o'er her eyes ; and tears she sheds—
Large tears that leave the lashes bright !
And oft the while she seems to smile
As infants at a sudden light !
Yea, she doth smile, and she doth weep
Like a youthful hermitess,
Beauteous in a wilderness,
Who, praying always, prays in sleep.
And, if she move unquietly,
Perchance, 'tis but the blood so free,
Comes back and tingles in her feet.
No doubt, she hath a vision sweet.

What if her guardian spirit 'twere ?
What if she knew her mother near ?
But this she knows, in joys and woes,
That saints will aid if men will call :
For the blue sky bends over all !

PART II.

EACH matin bell, the Baron saith,
Knells us back to a world of death.
These words Sir Leoline first said,
When he rose and found his lady dead :
These words Sir Leoline will say,
Many a morn to his dying day !

And hence the custom and law
That still at dawn the sacristan,
Who duly pulls the heavy bell,
Five-and-forty beads must tell
Between each stroke—a warning knell,
Which not a soul can choose but hear
From Bratha Head to Wyndermere.

Saith Bracy the bard, So let it knell !
And let the drowsy sacristan
Still count as slowly as he can !
There is no lack of such, I ween,
As well fill up the space between.
In Langdale Pike and Witch's Lair,
And Dungeon-ghyll so foully rent,
With ropes of rock and bells of air

Three sinful sextons' ghosts are pent,
Who all give back, one after t'other,
The death-note to their living brother ;
And oft too, by the knell offended,
Just as their one ! two ! three ! is ended,
The devil mocks the doleful tale
With a merry peal from Borodale.

The air is still ! through mist and cloud
That merry peal comes ringing loud ;
And Geraldine shakes off her dread,
And rises lightly from the bed ;
Puts on her silken vestments white.
And tricks her hair in lovely plight,
And nothing doubting of her spell
Awakens the lady Christabel.
"Sleep you, sweet lady Christabel ?
I trust that you have rested well."

And Christabel awoke and spied
The same who lay down by her side—
O rather say, the same whom she
Raised up beneath the old oak tree !
Nay, fairer yet ! and yet more fair !
For she belike hath drunken deep
Of all the blessedness of sleep !
And while she spake, her looks, her air
Such gentle thankfulness declare,
That (so it seemed) her girded vests
Grew tight beneath her heaving breasts.
"Sure I have sinned !" said Christabel,
"Now heaven be praised if all be well !"
And in low faltering tones, yet sweet,
Did she the lofty lady greet

With such perplexity of mind
As dreams too lively leave behind.

So quickly she rose, and quickly arrayed
Her maiden limbs, and having prayed
That He, who on the cross did groan,
Might wash away her sins unknown,
She forthwith led fair Geraldine
To meet her sire, Sir Leoline.

The lovely maid and the lady tall
Are pacing both into the hall,
And pacing on through page and groom,
Enter the Baron's presence room.

The Baron rose, and while he prest
His gentle daughter to his breast,
With cheerful wonder in his eyes
The lady Geraldine espies,
And gave such welcome to the same,
As might beseem so bright a dame !

But when he heard the lady's tale,
And when she told her father's name,
Why waxed Sir Leoline so pale,
Murmuring o'er the name again,
Lord Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine !

Alas ! they had been friends in youth ;
But whispering tongues can poison truth ;
And constancy lives in realms above ;
And life is thorny ; and youth is vain ;
And to be wroth with one we love
Doth work like madness in the brain.

And thus it chanced, as I divine,
With Roland and Sir Leoline.
Each spake words of high disdain
And insult to his heart's best brother :
They parted—ne'er to meet again !
But never either found another
To free the hollow heart from paining—
They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
Like cliffs which had been rent asunder
A dreary sea now flows between ;
But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
Shall wholly do away, I ween,
The marks of that which once hath been.

Sir Leoline, a moment's space,
Stood gazing on the damsel's face :
And the youthful Lord of Tryermaine
Came back upon his heart again.

O then the Baron forgot his age,
His noble heart swelled high with rage ;
He swore by the wounds in Jesu's side,
He would proclaim it far and wide
With trump and solemn heraldry,
That they who thus had wronged the-dame,
Were base as spotted infamy !
“ And if they dare deny the same,
My herald shall appoint a week,
And let the recreant traitors seek
My tourney court—that there and then
I may dislodge their reptile souls
From the bodies and forms of men ! ”
He spake : his eye in lightning rolls !

For the lady was ruthlessly seized ; and he kenned
In the beautiful lady the child of his friend !

And now the tears were on his face,
And fondly in his arms he took
Fair Geraldine, who met the embrace,
Prolonging it with joyous look.
Which when she viewed, a vision fell
Upon the soul of Christabel,
The vision of fear, the touch and pain !
She shrunk and shuddered, and saw again—
(Ah, woe is me ! Was it for thee,
Thou gentle maid ! such sights to see ?)
Again she saw that bosom old,
Again she felt that bosom cold,
And drew in her breath with a hissing sound :
Whereat the Knight turned wildly round,
And nothing saw, but his own sweet maid
With eyes upraised, as one that prayed.

The touch, the sight, had passed away,
And in its stead that vision blest,
Which comforted her after-rest,
While in the lady's arms she lay,
Had put a rapture in her breast,
And on her lips, and o'er her eyes
Spread smiles like light !

With new surprise,
“ What ails then my beloved child ? ”
The Baron said.—His daughter mild
Made answer, “ All will yet be well ! ”
I ween, she had no power to tell
Aught else : so mighty was the spell.

Yet he, who saw this Geraldine,
Had deemed her sure a thing divine.
Such sorrow with such grace she blended,
As if she feared she had offended
Sweet Christabel, that gentle maid !
And with such lowly tones she prayed,
She might be sent without delay
Home to her father's mansion.

“ Nay !

Nay, by my soul ! ” said Leoline.
“ Ho ! Bracy, the bard, the charge be thine !
Go thou, with music sweet and loud,
And take two steeds with trappings proud,
And take the youth whom thou lov'st best
To bear thy harp, and learn thy song,
And clothe you both in solemn vest,
And over the mountains haste along,
Lest wandering folk, that are abroad,
Detain you on the valley road.
And when he has crossed the Irthing flood,
My merry bard ! he hastes, he hastes
Up Knorren Moor, through Halegarth Wood,
And reaches soon that castle good
Which stands and threatens Scotland's wastes.

“ Bard Bracy ! bard Bracy ! your horses are
fleet,

Ye must ride up the hall, your music so sweet,
More loud than your horses' echoing feet !
And loud and loud to Lord Roland call,
Thy daughter is safe in Langdale hall !
Thy beautiful daughter is safe and free—
Sir Leoline greets thee thus through me.
He bids thee come without delay

With all thy numerous array ;
And take thy lovely daughter home :
And he will meet thee on the way
With all his numerous array
White with their panting palfreys' foam :
And by mine honour ! I will say,
That I repent me of the day
When I spake words of fierce disdain
To Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine !—
—For since that evil hour hath flown
Many a summer's sun hath shone ;
Yet ne'er found I a friend again
Like Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine."

The lady fell, and clasped his knees,
Her face upraised, her eyes o'erflowing ;
And Bracy replied, with faltering voice,
His gracious hail on all bestowing !—
"Thy words, thou sire of Christabel,
Are sweeter than my harp can tell ;
Yet might I gain a boon of thee.
This day my journey should not be,
So strange a dream hath come to me ;
That I had vowed with music loud
To clear yon wood from thing unblest,
Warned by a vision in my rest !
For in my sleep I saw that dove,
That gentle bird, whom thou dost love,
And call'st by thy own daughter's name—
Sir Leoline ! I saw the same
Fluttering, and uttering fearful moan,
Among the green herbs in the forest alone.
Which when I saw and when I heard,
I wonder'd what might ail the bird ;

For nothing near it could I see,
Save the grass and green herbs underneath the
old tree.

“And in my dream methought I went
To search out what might there be found ;
And what the sweet bird’s trouble meant,
That thus lay fluttering on the ground.
I went and peered, and could descry
No cause for her distressful cry ;
But yet for her dear lady’s sake
I stooped, methought, the dove to take,
When lo ! I saw a bright green snake
Coiled around its wings and neck,
Green as the herbs on which it couched,
Close by the dove’s its head it crouched ;
And with the dove it heaves and stirs,
Swelling its neck as she swelled hers !
I woke ; it was the midnight hour,
The clock was echoing in the tower ;
But though my slumber was gone by,
This dream it would not pass away—
It seems to live upon my eye !
And thence I vowed the self-same day,
With music strong and saintly song
To wander through the forest bare,
Lest aught unholy loiter there.”

Thus Bracy said : the Baron, the while,
Half-listening heard him with a smile ;
Then turned to Lady Geraldine,
His eyes made up of wonder and love ;
And said in courtly accents fine,
“Sweet maid, Lord Roland’s beauteous dove

With arms more strong than harp or song,
Thy sire and I will crush the snake ! ”
He kissed her forehead as he spake,
And Geraldine, in maiden wise,
Casting down her large bright eyes,
With blushing cheek and courtesy fine
She turned her from Sir Leoline ;
Softly gathering up her train,
That o'er her right arm fell again ;
And folded her arms across her chest,
And couched her head upon her breast,
And looked askance at Christabel——
Jesu Maria, shield her well !

A snake's small eye blinks dull and shy,
And the lady's eyes they shrunk in her head,
Each shrunk up to a serpent's eye,
And with somewhat of malice, and more of dread,
At Christabel she looked askance !—
One moment—and the sight was fled !
But Christabel in dizzy trance
Stumbling on the unsteady ground
Shuddered aloud, with a hissing sound ;
And Geraldine again turned round,
And like a thing, that sought relief,
Full of wonder and full of grief,
She rolled her large bright eyes divine
Wildly on Sir Leoline.

The maid, alas ! her thoughts are gone,
She nothing sees—no sight but one !
The maid, devoid of guile and sin,
I know not how, in fearful wise
So deeply had she drunken in

That look, those shrunken serpent eyes,
That all her features were resigned
To this sole image in her mind ;
And passively did imitate
That look of dull and treacherous hate !
And thus she stood, in dizzy trance,
Still picturing that look askance
With forced unconscious sympathy
Fall before her father's view——
As far as such a look could be,
In eyes so innocent and blue !
And when the trance was o'er, the maid
Paused awhile, and inly prayed :
Then falling at the Baron's feet,
" By my mother's soul do I entreat
That thou this woman send away !"
She said : and more she could not say :
For what she knew she could not tell,
O'er-mastered by the mighty spell.

Why is thy cheek so wan and wild,
Sir Leoline ? Thy only child
Lies at thy feet, thy joy, thy pride,
So fair, so innocent, so mild ;
The same, for whom thy lady died !
O by the pangs of her dear mother
Think thou no evil of thy child !
For her, and thee, and for no other,
She prayed the moment ere she died :
Prayed that the babe for whom she died,
Might prove her dear lord's joy and pride,
That prayer her deadly pangs beguiled,
Sir Leoline !

And wouldst thou wrong thy only child,
Her child and thine?

Within the Baron's heart and brain
If thoughts, like these, had any share,
They only swelled his rage and pain,
And did but work confusion there.
His heart was cleft with pain and rage,
His cheeks they quivered, his eyes were wild
Dishonoured thus in his old age;
Dishonoured by his only child,
And all his hospitality
To the wrong'd daughter of his friend
By more than woman's jealousy
Brought thus to a disgraceful end—
He rolled his eye with stern regard
Upon the gentle minstrel bard,
And said in tones abrupt, austere—
“Why, Bracy! dost thou loiter here?
I bade thee hence!” The bard obeyed;
And turning from his own sweet maid,
The aged knight, Sir Leoline,
Led forth the lady Geraldine!

THE CONCLUSION TO PART II.

A LITTLE child, a limber elf,
Singing, dancing to itself,
A fairy thing with red round cheeks,
That always finds, and never seeks,

Makes such a vision to the sight
As fills a father's eyes with light ;
And pleasures flow in so thick and fast
Upon his heart, that he at last
Must needs express his love's excess
With words of unmeant bitterness.
Perhaps 'tis pretty to force together
Thoughts so all unlike each other ;
To mutter and mock a broken charm,
To dally with wrong that does no harm.
Perhaps 'tis tender too and pretty
At each wild word to feel within
A sweet recoil of love and pity.
And what, if in a world of sin
(O sorrow and shame should this be true !)
Such giddiness of heart and brain
Comes seldom save from rage and pain,
So talks as it's most used to do.

KUBLA KHAN ; OR, A VISION IN A DREAM

A FRAGMENT.

IN Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree :
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.
So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round :

And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree ;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But oh ! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover !
A savage place ! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover !
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
A mighty fountain momently was forced ;
Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail :
And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momently the sacred river.
Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reached the caverns measureless to man,
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean :
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war !

The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves ;
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice !
A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw :

It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her dulcimer she played,
Singing of Mount Abora.
Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 'twould win me
That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome ! those caves of ice !
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware ! Beware !
His flashing eyes, his floating hair !
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

LOVE.

ALL thoughts, all passions, all delights,
Whatever stirs this mortal frame,
All are but ministers of Love,
And feed his sacred flame.

Oft in my waking dreams do I
Live o'er again that happy hour,
When midway on the mount I lay,
Beside the ruined tower.

The moonshine, stealing o'er the scene
Had blended with the lights of eve ;
And she was there, my hope, my joy,
My own dear Genevieve !

She lean'd against the armed man,
The statue of the armed knight ;
She stood and listened to my lay,
Amid the lingering light.

Few sorrows hath she of her own.
My hope ! my joy ! my Genevieve !
She loves me best, whene'er I sing
The songs that make her grieve.

I played a soft and doleful air,
I sang an old and moving story—
An old rude song, that suited well
That ruin wild and hoary.

She listened with a flitting blush,
With downcast eyes and modest grace ;
For well she knew, I could not choose
But gaze upon her face.

I told her of the Knight that wore
Upon his shield a burning brand ;
And that for ten long years he wooed
The Lady of the Land.

I told her how he pined : and ah !
The deep, the low, the pleading tone
With which I sang another's love,
Interpreted my own.

She listened with a flitting blush,
With downcast eyes, and modest grace ;
And she forgave me, that I gazed
Too fondly on her face !

But when I told the cruel scorn
That crazed that bold and lovely Knight,
And that he crossed the mountain-woods,
Nor rested day nor night ;

That sometimes from the savage den,
And sometimes from the darksome shade,
And sometimes starting up at once
In green and sunny glade—

There came and looked him in the face
An angel beautiful and bright ;
And that he knew it was a Fiend,
This miserable Knight !

And that unknowing what he did,
He leaped amid a murderous band,
And saved from outrage worse than death
The Lady of the Land—

And how she wept and clasped his knees ;
And how she tended him in vain—
And ever strove to expiate
The scorn that crazed his brain—

And that she nursed him in a cave ;
And how his madness went away,
When on the yellow forest leaves
A dying man he lay—

His dying words—but when I reached
That tenderest strain of all the ditty,
My faltering voice and pausing harp
Disturbed her soul with pity !

All impulses of soul and sense
Had thrilled my guileless Genevieve ;
The music and the doleful tale,
The rich and balmy eve ;

And hopes, and fears that kindle hope,
An undistinguishable throng,
And gentle wishes long subdued,
Subdued and cherished long !

She wept with pity and delight,
She blushed with love, and virgin shame ;
And like the murmur of a dream,
I heard her breathe my name.

Her bosom heaved—she stepped aside,
As conscious of my look she stept—
Then suddenly, with timorous eye
She fled to me and wept.

She half enclosed me with her arms,
She pressed me with a meek embrace ;
And bending back her head, looked up,
And gazed upon my face.

'Twas partly love, and partly fear,
And partly 'twas a bashful art,
That I might rather feel, than see,
The swelling of her heart.

I calmed her fears, and she was calm,
And told her love with virgin pride ;
And so I won my Genevieve,
My bright and beauteous Bride.

THE THREE GRAVES.

A FRAGMENT OF A SEXTON'S TALE.

THE grapes upon the Vicar's wall
Were ripe as ripe could be ;
And yellow leaves in sun and wind
Were falling from the tree.

On the hedge-elms in the narrow lane
Still swung the spikes of corn :
Dear Lord ! it seems but yesterday—
Young Edward's marriage-morn.

Up through that wood behind the church,
There leads from Edward's door
A mossy track, all over boughed,
For half-a-mile or more.

And from their house-door by that track
The bride and bridegroom went ;
Sweet Mary, though she was not gay,
Seemed cheerful and content.

But when they to the churchyard came,
I've heard poor Mary say,
As soon as she stepped into the sun,
Her heart it died away.

And when the Vicar joined their hands,
Her limbs did creep and freeze ;
But when they prayed, she thought she saw
Her mother on her knees.

And o'er the church-path they returned—
I saw poor Mary's back,
Just as she stepped beneath the boughs
Into the mossy track.

Her feet upon the mossy track
The married maiden set :
That moment—I have heard her say—
She wished she could forget.

The shade o'er-flushed her limbs with heat,
Then came a chill like death :
And when the merry bells rang out,
They seemed to stop her breath.

Beneath the foulest mother's curse
No child could ever thrive :
A mother is a mother still,
The holiest thing alive.

So five months passed : the mother still
Would never heal the strife ;
But Edward was a loving man,
And Mary a fond wife.

" My sister may not visit us,
My mother says her nay :
O Edward ! you are all to me,
I wish for your sake I could be
More lifesome and more gay.

I'm dull and sad ! indeed, indeed
I know I have no reason !
Perhaps, I am not well in health,
And 'tis a gloomy season."

'Twas a drizzly time—no ice, no snow !
And on the few fine days
She stirred not out, lest she might meet
Her mother in the ways.

But Ellen, spite of miry ways
And weather dark and dreary,
Trudged every day to Edward's house,
And made them all more cheery.

Oh ! Ellen was a faithful friend,
More dear than any sister !
As cheerful too as singing lark ;
And she ne'er left them till 'twas dark,
And then they always missed her.

And now Ash-Wednesday came—that day
But few to church repair :
For on that day you know we read
The Commination prayer.

Our late old Vicar, a kind man,
Once, sir, he said to me,

He wished that service was clean out
Of our good liturgy.

The mother walked into the church—
To Ellen's seat she went :
Though Ellen always kept her church
All church-days during Lent.

And gentle Ellen welcomed her
With courteous looks and mild :
Thought she, "What if her heart should melt,
And all be reconciled !"

The day was scarcely like a day—
The clouds were black outright ;
And many a night, with half a moon,
I've seen the church more light.

The wind was wild ; against the glass
The rain did beat and bicker ;
The church-tower swinging overhead,
You scarce could hear the Vicar !

And then and there the mother knelt,
And audibly she cried—
"Oh ! may a clinging curse consume
This woman by my side !

O hear me, hear me, Lord in Heaven,
Although you take my life—
O curse this woman, at whose house
Young Edward woo'd his wife.

By night and day, in bed and bower,
O let her cursed be !”
So having prayed, steady and slow,
She rose up from her knee,
And left the church, nor e'er again
The church door entered she.

I saw poor Ellen kneeling still,
So pale, I guessed not why :
When she stood up, there plainly was
A trouble in her eye.

And when the prayers were done, we all
Came round and asked her why :
Giddy she seemed, and sure, there was
A trouble in her eye.

But ere she from the church-door stepped
She smiled and told us why :
“ It was a wicked woman's curse,”
Quoth she, “ and what care I !”

She smiled, and smiled, and passed it off
Ere from the door she stept—
But all agree it would have been
Much better had she wept.

And if her heart was not at ease,
This was her constant cry—
“ It was a wicked woman's curse—
God's good, and what care I !”

There was a hurry in her looks,
Her struggles she redoubled :

"It was a wicked woman's curse,
And why should I be troubled?"

These tears will come—I dandled her
When 'twas the merest fairy—
Good creature! and she hid it all:
She told it not to Mary.

But Mary heard the tale: her arms
Round Ellen's neck she threw;
"O Ellen, Ellen, she cursed me,
And now she hath cursed you!"

I saw young Edward by himself
Stalk fast adown the lee,
He snatched a stick from every fence,
A twig from every tree.

He snapped them still with hand or knee,
And then away they flew!
As if with his uneasy limbs
He knew not what to do!

You see, good sir! that single hill!
His farm lies underneath:
He heard it there, he heard it all,
And only gnashed his teeth.

Now Ellen was a darling love
In all his joys and cares:
And Ellen's name and Mary's name
Fast-linked they both together came,
Whene'er he said his prayers.

And in the moment of his prayers
He loved them both alike :
Yea, both sweet names with one sweet joy
Upon his heart did strike !

He reach'd his home, and by his looks
They saw his inward strife :
And they clung round him with their arms,
Both Ellen and his wife.

And Mary could not check her tears,
So on his breast she bowed ;
Then frenzy melted into grief,
And Edward wept aloud.

Dear Ellen did not weep at all,
But closlier did she cling,
And turned her face and looked as if
She saw some frightful thing.

THE THREE GRAVES.

PART IV.

To see a man tread over graves
I hold it no good mark ;
'Tis wicked in the sun and moon,
And bad luck in the dark !

You see that grave ? The Lord He gives,
The Lord He takes away :

O sir ! the child of my old age
Lies there as cold as clay.

Except that grave, you scarce see one
That was not dug by me ;
I'd rather dance upon 'em all
Than tread upon these three !

" Ay, Sexton ! 'tis a touching tale."
You, sir ! are but a lad ;
This month I'm in my seventieth year,
And still it makes me sad.

And Mary's sister told it me,
For three good hours and more ;
Though I had heard it, in the main,
From Edward's self before.

Well ! it passed off ! the gentle Ellen
Did well nigh dote on Mary ;
And she went oftener than before,
And Mary loved her more and more ;
She managed all the dairy.

To market she on market-days,
To church on Sundays came ;
All seemed the same : all seemed so, sir !
But all was not the same !

Had Ellen lost her mirth ? Oh ! no !
But she was seldom cheerful ;
And Edward looked as if he thought
That Ellen's mirth was fearful.

When by herself, she to herself
Must sing some merry rhyme ;
She could not now be glad for hours,
Yet silent all the time.

And when she soothed her friend, through all
Her soothing words 'twas plain
She had a sore grief of her own,
A haunting in her brain.

And oft she said, I'm not growing thin !
And then her wrist she spanned ;
And once when Mary was downcast,
She took her by the hand,
And gazed upon her, and at first
She gently pressed her hand ;

Then harder, till her grasp at length
Did gripe like a convulsion !
Alas ! said she, we ne'er can be
Made happy by compulsion !

And once her both arms suddenly
Round Mary's neck she flung,
And her heart panted, and she felt
The words upon her tongue.

She felt them coming, but no power
Had she the words to smother ;
And with a kind of shriek she cried,
"O Christ ! you're like your mother !"

So gentle Ellen now no more
Could make this sad house cheery ;

And Mary's melancholy ways
Drove Edward wild and weary.

Lingering he raised his latch at eve,
Though tired in heart and limb :
He loved no other place, and yet
Home was no home to him.

One evening he took up a book,
And nothing in it read ;
Then flung it down, and groaning cried,
"O ! Heaven ! that I were dead."

Mary looked up into his face,
And nothing to him said ;
She tried to smile, and on his arm
Mournfully leaned her head.

And he burst into tears, and fell
Upon his knees in prayer ;
"Her heart is broke ! O God ! my grief,
It is too great to bear !"

'Twas such a foggy time as makes
Old sextons, sir ! like me,
Rest on their spades to cough ; the spring
Was late uncommonly.

And then the hot days, all at once,
They came, we knew not how :
You looked about for shade, when scarce
A leaf was on a bough.

It happened then ('twas in the bower
A furlong up the wood :
Perhaps you know the place, and yet
I scarce know how you should—)

No path leads thither, 'tis not nigh
To any pasture-plot ;
But clustered near the chattering brook,
Lone hollies marked the spot.

Those hollies of themselves a shape
As of an arbour took,
A close, round arbour ; and it stands
Not three strides from a brook.

Within this arbour, which was still
With scarlet berries hung,
Were these three friends, one Sunday morn
Just as the first bell rung.

'Tis sweet to hear a brook, 'tis sweet
To hear the Sabbath-bell,
'Tis sweet to hear them both at once,
Deep in a woody dell.

His limbs along the moss, his head
Upon a mossy heap,
With shut-up senses, Edward lay :
That brook e'en on a working day
Might chatter one to sleep.

And he had passed a restless night,
And was not well in health ;

The women sat down by his side,
And talked as 'twere by stealth.

“The sun peeps through the close thick leaves,
See, dearest Ellen ! see !
'Tis in the leaves, a little sun,
No bigger than your e'e ;

A tiny sun, and it has got
A perfect glory too ;
Ten thousand threads and hairs of light,
Make up a glory, gay and bright,
Round that small orb, so blue.”

And then they argued of those rays,
What colour they might be ;
Says this, “They're mostly green ;” says that,
“They're amber-like to me.”

So they sat chatting, while bad thoughts
Were troubling Edward's rest ;
But soon they heard his hard quick pants,
And the thumping in his breast.

“A mother too !” these self-same words
Did Edward mutter plain ;
His face was drawn back on itself,
With horror and huge pain.

Both groaned at once, for both knew well
What thoughts were in his mind ;
When he waked up, and stared like one
That hath been just struck blind.

* 7

He sat upright ; and ere the dream
Had had time to depart,
" O God, forgive me ! (he exclaimed)
I have torn out her heart."

Then Ellen shrieked, and forthwith burst
Into ungentle laughter ;
And Mary shivered, where she sat,
And never she smiled after.

INTRODUCTION TO THE TALE OF THE
DARK LADIE.

O LEAVE the lily on its stem ;
O leave the rose upon the spray ;
O leave the elder bloom, fair maids !
And listen to my lay.

A cypress and a myrtle bough
This morn around my harp you twined,
Because it fashioned mournfully
Its murmurs in the wind.

And now a tale of love and woe,
A woeful tale of love I sing ;
Hark, gentle maidens ! hark, it sighs
And trembles on the string.

But most, my own dear Genevieve,
It sighs and trembles most for thee !

O come and hear the cruel wrongs,
Befell the Dark Ladie !

And now, once more a tale of woe,
A woeful tale of love I sing ;
For thee, my Genevieve, it sighs,
And trembles on the string.

When last I sang the cruel scorn,
That crazed this bold and lovely knight,
And how he roamed the mountain woods,
Nor rested day nor night ;

I promised thee a sister tale,
Of man's perfidious cruelty ;
Come then, and hear what cruel wrong
Befell the Dark Ladie.

THE BALLAD OF THE DARK LADIE.

A FRAGMENT.

BENEATH yon birch with silver bark,
And boughs so pendulous and fair,
The brook falls scatter'd down the rock :
And all is mossy there !

And there upon the moss she sits,
The Dark Ladie in silent pain ;
The heavy tear is in her eye,
And drops and swells again.

Three times she sends her little page
Up the castled mountain's breast,
If he might find the Knight that wears
The Griffin for his crest.

The sun was sloping down the sky,
And she had lingered there all day,
Counting moments, dreaming fears—
O wherefore can he stay?

She hears a rustling o'er the brook,
She sees far off a swinging bough!
" 'Tis He! 'Tis my betrothed Knight!
Lord Falkland, is it Thou?"

She springs, she clasps him round the neck,
She sobs a thousand hopes and fears,
Her kisses glowing on his cheeks
She quenches with her tears.

" My friends with rude ungentle words
They scoff and bid me fly to thee!
O give me shelter in thy breast!
O shield and shelter me!

My Henry, I have given thee much,
I gave what I can ne'er recall,
I gave my heart, I gave my peace,
O heaven! I gave thee all."

The Knight made answer to the Maid,
While to his heart he held her hand,
" Nine castles hath my noble sire,
None statelier in the land.

The fairest one shall be my love's,
The fairest castle of the nine !
Wait only till the stars peep out,
The fairest shall be thine :

Wait only till the hand of eve
Hath wholly closed yon western bars,
And through the dark we two will steal
Beneath the twinkling stars !"

"The dark ? the dark ? No ! not the dark ?
The twinkling stars ? How, Henry ? How ?
O God ! 'twas in the eye of noon
He pledged his sacred vow !

And in the eye of noon, my love,
Shall lead me from my mother's door,
Sweet boys and girls all clothed in white
Strewing flow'rs before :

But first the nodding minstrels go
With music meet for lordly bow'rs,
The children next in snow-white vests,
Strewing buds and flow'rs !

And then my love and I shall pace,
My jet black hair in pearly braids,
Between our comely bachelors
And blushing bridal maids."

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ALICE DU CLOS ;

OR, THE FORKED TONGUE. A BALLAD.

“THE Sun is not yet risen,
But the dawn lies red on the dew :
Lord Julian has stolen from the hunters away,
Is seeking, Lady, for you.
Put on your dress of green,
Your buskins and your quiver ;
Lord Julian is a hasty man,
Long waiting brook'd he never.
I dare not doubt him, that he means
To wed you on a day,
Your lord and master for to be,
And you his lady gay.
O Lady ! throw your book aside !
I would not that my Lord should chide.”

Thus spake Sir Hugh the vassal knight
To Alice, child of old Du Clos,
As spotless fair, as airy light
As that moon-shiny doe,
The gold star on its brow, her sire's ancestral crest !
For ere the lark had left his nest,
She in the garden bower below
Sate loosely wrapt in maiden white,
Her face half drooping from the sight,
A snow-drop on a tuft of snow !

O close your eyes, and strive to see
The studious maid, with book on knee—
Ah ! earliest-open'd flower ;

While yet with keen unblunted light
The morning star shone opposite
The lattice of her bower—
Alone of all the starry host,
As if in prideful scorn
Of flight and fear he stay'd behind,
To brave th' advancing morn.

O ! Alice could read passing well,
And she was conning then
Dan Ovid's mazy tale of loves,
And gods, and beasts, and men.

The vassal's speech, his taunting vein,
It thrill'd like venom thro' her brain ;
Yet never from the book
She rais'd her head, nor did she deign
The knight a single look.

" Off, traitor friend ! how dar'st thou fix
Thy wanton gaze on me ?
And why, against my earnest suit,
Does Julian send by thee ?

Go, tell thy Lord, that slow is sure :
Fair speeds his shafts to-day !
I follow here a stronger lure,
And chase a gentler prey."

She said : and with a baleful smile
The vassal knight reel'd off—
Like a huge billow from a bark
Toil'd in the deep sea-trough,

That shouldering sideways in mid plunge,
Is travers'd by a flash,
And staggering onward, leaves the ear
With dull and distant crash.

And Alice sate with troubled mien
A moment ; for the scoff was keen,
And thro' her veins did shiver !
Then rose and donn'd her dress of green,
Her buskins and her quiver.

There stands the flow'ring may-thorn tree !
From thro' the veiling mist you see
The black and shadowy stem ;
Smit by the sun the mist in glee
Dissolves to lightsome jewelry—
Each blossom hath its gem !

With tear-drop glittering to a smile,
The gay-maid on the garden stile
Mimics the hunter's shout.
“ Hip ! Florian, hip ! To horse, to horse !
Go, bring the palfrey out.

My Julian's out with all his clan,
And, bonny boy, you wis,
Lord Julian is a hasty man,
Who comes late, comes amiss.”

Now Florian was a stripling squire,
A gallant boy of Spain,
That tossed his head in joy and pride,
Behind his Lady fair to ride,
But blush'd to hold her train.

The huntress is in her dress of green—
And forth they go ; she with her bow,
Her buskins and her quiver !—
The squire—no younger e'er was seen—
With restless arm and laughing een,
He makes his javelin quiver.

And had not Ellen stay'd the race,
And stopp'd to see, a moment's space,
The whole great globe of light
Give the last parting kiss-like touch
To the eastern ridge, it lack'd not much,
They had o'erta'en the knight.

It chanced that up the covert lane,
Where Julian waiting stood,
A neighbour knight prick'd on to join
The huntsmen in the wood.

And with him must Lord Julian go,
Tho' with an anger'd mind :
Betroth'd not wedded to his bride,
In vain he sought, 'twixt shame and pride,
Excuse to stay behind.

He bit his lip, he wrung his glove,
He look'd around, he look'd above,
But pretext none could find or frame !
Alas ! alas ! and well-a-day !
It grieves me sore to think, to say,
That names so seldom meet with Love,
Yet Love wants courage without a name !

Straight from the forest's skirt the trees
O'erbranching, made an aisle,
Where hermit old might pace and chaunt
As in a minster's pile.

From underneath its leafy screen,
And from the twilight shade,
You pass at once into a green,
A green and lightsome glade.

And there Lord Julian sate on steed ;
Behind him, in a round,
Stood knight and squire, and menial train ;
Against the leash the greyhounds strain ;
The horses paw'd the ground.

When up the alley green, Sir Hugh
Spurr'd in upon the sward,
And mute, without a word, did he
Fall in behind his lord.

Lord Julian turn'd his steed half round. —
“ What ! doth not Alice deign
To accept your loving convoy, knight ?
Or doth she fear our woodland sleight,
And joins us on the plain ? ”

With stifled tones the knight replied,
And looked askance on either side—
“ Nay, let the hunt proceed—
The Lady's message that I bear,
I guess would scantily please your ear,
And less deserves your heed.

You sent betimes. Not yet unbarr'd
I found the middle door—
Two stirrers only met my eyes,
Fair Alice, and one more.

I came unlook'd for : and, it seem'd,
In an unwelcome hour ;
And found the daughter of Du Clos
Within the lattic'd bower.

But hush ! the rest may wait. If lost,
No great loss, I divine ;
And idle words will better suit
A fair maid's lips than mine."

"God's wrath ! speak out, man," Julian cried,
O'ermaster'd by the sudden smart—
And feigning wrath, sharp, blunt, and rude,
The knight his subtle shift pursued.—
"Scowl not at me ; command my skill,
To lure your hawk back, if you will,
But not a woman's heart.

'Go ! (said she) tell him—slow is sure,
Fair speed his shafts to-day !
I follow here a stronger lure,
And chase a gentler prey.'

The game, pardie, was full in sight,
That then did, if I saw aright,
The fair dame's eyes engage ;
For turning, as I took my ways,
I saw them fix'd with steadfast gaze
Full on her wanton page."

The last word of the traitor knight
It had but entered Julian's ear—
From two o'erarching oaks between,
With glist'ning helm-like cap is seen,
Borne on in giddy cheer,
A youth, that ill his steed can guide ;
Yet with reverted face doth ride,
As answering to a voice,
That seems at once to laugh and chide—
"Not mine, dear mistress," still he cried,
"'Tis this mad filly's choice."

With sudden bound, beyond the boy,
See ! see ! that face of hope and joy,
That regal front ! those cheeks aglow ?
Thou needed'st but the crescent sheen,
A quiver'd Dian to have been,
Thou lovely child of old Du Clos !

Dark as a dream Lord Julian stood,
Swift as a dream, from forth the wood,
Sprang on the plighted Maid !
With fatal aim, and frantic force,
The shaft was hurl'd !—a lifeless corse,
Fair Alice from her vaulting horse,
Lies bleeding on the glade.



FIRE, FAMINE, AND SLAUGHTER.

A WAR ECOLOGUE.

The Scene a desolated Track in La Vendée. FAMINE is discovered lying on the ground ; to her enter FIRE and SLAUGHTER.

FAMINE.

SISTERS ! sisters ! who sent you here ?

SLAUGHTER [*to FIRE*].

I will whisper it in her ear.

FIRE.

No ! no ! no !

Spirits hear what spirits tell :
"Twill make a holiday in Hell.

No ! no ! no !

Myself, I named him once below,
And all the souls, that damned be,
Leaped up at once in anarchy,
Clapped their hands and danced for glee.
They no longer heeded me ;
But laughed to hear Hell's burning rafters
Unwillingly re-echo laughter !

No ! no ! no !

Spirits hear what spirits tell :
"Twill make a holiday in Hell !

110 *FIRE, FAMINE, AND SLAUGHTER.*

FAMINE.

Whisper it, sister ! so and so !
In a dark hint, soft and slow.

SLAUGHTER.

Letters four do form his name—
And who sent you ?

BOTH.

The same ! the same !

SLAUGHTER.

He came by stealth, and unlocked my den,
And I have drunk the blood since then
Of thrice three hundred thousand men.

BOTH.

Who bade you do it ?

SLAUGHTER.

The same ! the same !
Letters four do form his name.
He let me loose, and cried, Halloo !
To him alone the praise is due.

FAMINE.

Thanks, sister, thanks ! the men have bled,
Their wives and their children faint for bread.

FIRE, FAMINE, AND SLAUGHTER. 111

I stood in a swampy field of battle ;
With bones and skulls I made a rattle,
To frighten the wolf and carrion-crow,
And the homeless dog—but they would not go.
So off I flew : for how could I bear
To see them gorge their dainty fare ?
I heard a groan and a peevish squall,
And through the chink of a cottage-wall—
Can you guess what I saw there ?

BOTH.

Whisper it, sister ! in our ear.

FAMINE.

A baby beat its dying mother :
I had starved the one and was starving the other !

BOTH.

Who bade you do't ?

FAMINE.

The same ! the same !
Letters four do form his name.
He let me loose, and cried, Halloo !
To him alone the praise is due.

FIRE.

Sisters ! I from Ireland came !
Hedge and corn-fields all on flame,



I triumphed o'er the setting sun !
And all the while the work was done,
On as I strode with my huge strides,
I flung back my head and I held my sides,
It was so rare a piece of fun
To see the sweltered cattle run
With uncouth gallop through the night,
Scared by the red and noisy light !
By the light of his own blazing cot
Was many a naked rebel shot :
The house-stream met the flame and hissed,
While crash ! fell in the roof, I wist,
On some of those old bed-ridden nurses,
That deal in discontent and curses.

BOTH.

Who bade you do't ?

FIRE.

The same ! the same !
Letters four do form his name.
He let me loose, and cried, Halloo !
To him alone the praise is due.

ALL.

He let us loose, and cried, Halloo !
How shall we yield him honour due ?

FAMINE.

Wisdom comes with lack of food.
I'll gnaw, I'll gnaw the multitude,

Till the cup of rage o'erbrim :
They shall seize him and his brood—

SLAUGHTER.

They shall tear him limb from limb !

FIRE.

O thankless beldames and untrue !
And is this all that you can do
For him, who did so much for you ?
Ninety months he, by my troth !
Hath richly catered for you both ;
And in an hour would you repay
An eight years' work ?—Away ! away !
I alone am faithful ! I
Cling to him everlastingly.

YOUTH AND AGE.

VERSE, a breeze mid blossoms straying,
Where Hope clung feeding, like a bee—
Both were mine ! Life went a-maying
With Nature, Hope, and Poesy,
When I was young !
When I was young ?—Ah, woful When !
Ah ! for the change 'twixt Now and Then !
This breathing house not built with hands,
This body that does me grievous wrong,
O'er aery cliffs and glittering sands,

How lightly then it flashed along—
Like those trim skiffs, unknown of yore,
On winding lakes and rivers wide,
That ask no aid of sail or oar,
That fear no spite of wind or tide !
Nought cared this body for wind or weather
When Youth and I liv'd in't together.

Flowers are lovely ! Love is flower-like ;
Friendship is a sheltering tree ;
O ! the joys, that came down shower-like,
Of Friendship, Love, and Liberty,

Ere I was old.

Ere I was old ? Ah, woful Ere,
Which tells me, Youth's no longer here !
O Youth ! for years so many and sweet,
'Tis known, that Thou and I were one,
I'll think it but a fond conceit—
It cannot be, that Thou art gone !
Thy vesper-bell hath not yet toll'd—
And thou wert aye a masker bold !
What strange disguise hast now put on,
To make believe, that Thou art gone ?
I see these locks in silvery slips,
This drooping gait, this altered size :
But springtide blossoms on thy lips,
And tears take sunshine from thine eyes !
Life is but thought : so think I will
That Youth and I are house-mates still.

Dew-drops are the gems of morning,
But the tears of mournful eve !

Where no hope is, life's a warning
That only serves to make us grieve,
 When we are old !
That only serves to make us grieve
With oft and tedious taking-leave,
Like some poor nigh-related guest
That may not rudely be dismiss.
Yet hath outstay'd his welcome while,
And tells the jest without the smile.

THE PAINS OF SLEEP.

ERE on my bed my limbs I lay,
It hath not been my use to pray
With moving lips or bended knees ;
But silently by slow degrees,
My spirit I to Love compose,
In humble trust mine eye-lids close,
With reverential resignation,
No wish conceived, no thought exprest,
Only a sense of supplication ;
A sense o'er all my soul imprest
That I am weak, yet not unblest,
Since in me, round me, everywhere
Eternal strength and wisdom are.

But yester-night I prayed aloud
In anguish and in agony,
Up-starting from the fiendish crowd
Of shapes and thoughts that tortured me :
A lurid light, a trampling throng,
Sense of intolerable wrong,

And whom I scorned, those only strong !
Thirst of revenge, the powerless will
Still baffled, and yet burning still !
Desire with loathing strangely mixed
On wild or hateful objects fixed.
Fantastic passions ! maddening brawl !
And shame and terror over all !
Deeds to be hid which were not hid,
Which all confused I could not know,
Whether I suffered, or I did :
For all seemed guilt, remorse, or woe,
My own or others still the same
Life-stifling fear, soul-stifling shame.

So two nights passed : the night's dismay,
Saddened and stunned the coming day.
Sleep, the wide blessing, seemed to me
Distemper's worst calamity.
The third night, when my own loud scream
Had waked me from the fiendish dream,
O'ercome with sufferings, strange and wild,
I wept as I had been a child ;
And having thus by tears subdued
My anguish to a milder mood,
Such punishments, I said, were due
To natures deepliest stained with sin—
For aye entempesting anew
The unfathomable hell within
The horror of their deeds to view,
To know and loathe, yet wish and do !
Such griefs with such men well agree,
But wherefore, wherefore fall on me ?
To be beloved is all I need,
And whom I love, I love indeed.

LEWTI ;

OR, THE CIRCASSIAN LOVE-CHANT,

AT midnight by the stream I roved,
To forget the form I loved.
Image of Lewti ! from my mind
Depart ; for Lewti is not kind.

The Moon was high, the moonlight gleam
And the shadow of a star
Heaved upon Tamaha's stream ;
But the rock shone brighter far,
The rock half sheltered from my view
By pending boughs of tressy yew—
So shines my Lewti's forehead fair,
Gleaming through her sable hair.
Image of Lewti ! from my mind
Depart ; for Lewti is not kind.

I saw a cloud of palest hue,
Onward to the moon it passed ;
Still brighter and more bright it grew,
With floating colours not a few,
Till it reached the moon at last :
Then the cloud was wholly bright,
With a rich and amber light !
And so with many a hope I seek,
And with such joy I find my Lewti ;
And even so my pale wan cheek
Drinks in as deep a flush of beauty !
Nay treacherous image ! leave my mind,
If Lewti never will be kind.

The little cloud—it floats away,
Away it goes ; away so soon ?
Alas ! it has no power to stay :
Its hues are dim, its hues are gray—
Away it passes from the moon !
How mournfully it seems to fly,
Ever fading more and more,
To joyless regions of the sky—
And now 'tis whiter than before !
As white as my poor cheek will be,
When, Lewti ! on my couch I lie,
A dying man for love of thee.
Nay, treacherous image ! leave my mind—
And yet, thou didst not look unkind.

I saw a vapour in the sky,
Thin, and white, and very high ;
I ne'er beheld so thin a cloud :
Perhaps the breezes that can fly
Now below and now above,
Have snatched aloft the lawny shroud
Of Lady fair—that died for love.
For maids, as well as youths, have perished
From fruitless love too fondly cherished
Nay, treacherous image ! leave my mind—
For Lewti never will be kind.

Hush ! my heedless feet from under
Slip the crumbling banks for ever :
Like echoes to a distant thunder.
They plunge into the gentle river.
The river-swans have heard my tread,
And startle from their reedy bed.

O beauteous birds ! methinks ye measure
Your movements to some heavenly tune !
O beauteous birds ! 'tis such a pleasure
To see you move beneath the moon,
I would it were your true delight
To sleep by day and wake all night.

I know the place where Lewti lies,
When silent night hath closed her eyes :
It is a breezy jasmine-bower,
The nightingale sings o'er her head :
Voice of the night ! had I the power
That leafy labyrinth to thread,
And creep, like thee, with soundless tread,
I then might view her bosom white
Heaving lovely to my sight,
As these two swans together heave
On the gently swelling wave.

Oh ! that she saw me in a dream,
And dreamt that I had died for care ;
All pale and wasted I would seem,
Yet fair withal, as spirits are !
I'd die indeed, if I might see
Her bosom heave, and heave for me !
Soothe, gentle image ! soothe my mind !
To-morrow Lewti may be kind.



ODE TO THE DEPARTING YEAR.

I.

SPIRIT who sweepst the wild harp of Time !
It is most hard, with an untroubled ear
Thy dark inwoven harmonies to hear !
Yet, mine eye fixed on Heaven's unchanging clime,
Long had I listened, free from mortal fear,
With inward stillness, and a bowed mind ;
When lo ! its folds far waving on the wind,
I saw the train of the departing Year !
Starting from my silent sadness,
Then with no unholy madness
Ere yet the entered cloud foreclosed my sight,
I raised the impetuous song, and solemnised his flight.

II.

Hither, from the recent tomb,
From the prison's direr gloom,
From distemper's midnight anguish ;
And thence, where poverty doth waste and languish !
Or where, his two bright torches blending,
Love illumines manhood's maze ;
Or where o'er cradled infant's bending
Hope has fixed her wishful gaze ;
Hither, in perplexed dance,
Ye Woes ! ye young-eyed Joys ! advance !

By Time's wild harp, and by the hand
Whose indefatigable sweep
Raises its fateful strings from sleep,
I bid you haste, a mixed tumultuous band !
From every private bower,
And each domestic hearth,
Haste for one solemn hour ;
And with a loud and yet a louder voice,
O'er Nature struggling in portentous birth,
Weep and rejoice !
Still echoes the dread that o'er the earth
Let slip the storm, and woke the brood of hell :
And now advance in saintly jubilee
Justice and Truth ! They too have heard thy spell !
They too obey thy name, divinest Liberty !

III.

I marked Ambition in his war-array !
I heard the mailed Monarch's troublous cry—
“ Ah ! wherefore does the Northern Conqueress stay !
Groans not her chariot on its onward way ? ”
Fly, mailed Monarch, fly !
Stunned by Death's twice mortal mace.
No more on murder's lurid face
The insatiate hag shall gloat with drunken eye !
Manes of the unnumbered slain !
Ye that gasped on Warsaw's plain !
Ye that erst at Ismail's tower,
When human ruin choked the streams,
Fell in conquest's glutted hour,
'Mid women's shrieks and infants' screams !
Spirits of the uncoffined slain,
Sudden blasts of triumph swelling,

Of, at night, in misty train,
Rush around her narrow dwelling !
The exterminating fiend is fled—
(Foul her life, and dark her doom)
Mighty armies of the dead
Dance, like death-fires, round her tomb !
Then with prophetic song relate,
Each some tyrant-murderer's fate !

IV.

Departing Year ! 'twas on no earthly shore.
My soul beheld thy vision ! Where alone,
Voiceless and stern, before the cloudy throne,
Aye Memory sits : thy robe inscribed with gore,
With many an unimaginable groan
Thou storied'st thy sad hours ! Silence ensued,
Deep silence o'er the ethereal multitude,
Whose locks with wreaths, whose wreaths with glories
shone.
Then, his eye wild ardours glancing,
From the choired gods advancing,
The Spirit of the Earth made reverence meet,
And stood up, beautiful, before the cloudy seat.

V.

Throughout the blissful throng,
Hushed were harp and song :
Till wheeling round the throne the Lampads seven,
(The mystic Words of Heaven)
Permissive signal make :
The fervent Spirit bowed, then spread his wings and
spake !

"Thou in stormy blackness throning
Love and uncreated Light,
By the Earth's unsolaced groaning,
Seize thy terrors, Arm of might !
By peace with proffered insult scared,
Masked hate and envying scorn !
By years of havoc yet unborn !
And hunger's bosom to the frost-winds bared !
But chief by Afric's wrongs,
Strange, horrible, and foul !
By what deep guilt belongs
To the deep Synod, ' full of gifts and lies !'
By wealth's insensate laugh ! by torture's howl !
Avenger, rise !
For ever shall the thankless Island scowl,
Her quiver full, and with unbroken bow ?
Speak ! from thy storm-black Heaven, O speak aloud !
And on the darkling foe
Open thine eye of fire from some uncertain cloud !
O dart the flash ! O rise and deal the blow !
The Past to thee, to thee the Future cries !
Hark ! how wide Nature joins her groans below !
Rise, God of Nature ! rise."

VI.

The voice had ceased, the vision fled ;
Yet still I gasped and reeled with dread.
And ever, when the dream of night
Renews the phantom to my sight,
Cold sweat-drops gather on my limbs ;
My ears throb hot ; my eye-balls start ;
My brain with horrid tumult swims ;
Wild is the tempest of my heart ;

And my thick and struggling breath
Imitates the toil of death !
No stranger agony confounds
The soldier on the war-field spread,
When all foredone with toil and wounds,
Death-like he dozes among heaps of dead !
(The strife is o'er, the daylight fled,
And the night-wind clamours hoarse !
See ! the starting wretch's head
Lies pillowed on a brother's corse !

VII.

Not yet enslaved, not wholly vile,
O Albion ! O my mother Isle !
Thy valleys, fair as Eden's bowers,
Glitter green with sunny showers ;
Thy grassy uplands' gentle swells
Echo to the bleat of flocks ;
(Those grassy hills, those glittering dells
Proudly ramparted with rocks)
And Ocean mid his uproar wild
Speaks safety to his island-child.
Hence for many a fearless age
Has social Quiet loved thy shore ;
Nor ever proud invader's rage
Or sacked thy towers, or stained thy fields with gore.

VIII.

Abandoned of Heaven ! mad avarice thy guide,
At cowardly distance, yet kindling with pride—
Mid thy herds and thy corn-fields secure thou hast
stood,
And joined the wild yelling of famine and blood !

The nations curse thee ! They with eager wondering
Shall hear Destruction, like a vulture, scream !
Strange-eyed Destruction ! who with many a dream
Of central fires through nether seas upthundering
Soothes her fierce solitude ; yet as she lies
By livid fount, or red volcanic stream,
If ever to her lidless dragon-eyes,
O Albion ! thy predestined ruins rise,
The fiend-hag on her perilous couch doth leap,
Muttering distempered triumph in her charmed sleep.

IX.

Away, my soul, away !
In vain, in vain the birds of warning sing—
And hark ! I hear the famished brood of prey
Flap their lank pennons on the groaning wind !
Away, my soul, away !
I unpartaking of the evil thing,
With daily prayer and daily toil
Soliciting for food my scanty soil,
Have wailed my country with a loud Lament.
Now I recentre my immortal mind
In the deep Sabbath of meek self-content ;
Cleansed from the vaporous passions that bedim
God's Image, sister of the Seraphim.



FRANCE—AN ODE.

I.

YE Clouds ! that far above me float and pause,
Whose pathless march no mortal may control !
Ye Ocean-Waves ! that, wheresoe'er ye roll,
Yield homage only to eternal laws !
Ye Woods ! that listen to the night-birds singing,
Midway the smooth and perilous slope reclined,
Save when your own imperious branches swinging,
Have made a solemn music of the wind !
Where, like a man beloved of God,
Through glooms, which never woodman trod,
How oft, pursuing fancies holy,
My moonlight way o'er flowering weeds I wound,
Inspired, beyond the guess of folly,
By each rude shape and wild unconquerable sound !
O ye loud Waves ! and O ye Forests high !
And O ye clouds that far above me soared !
Thou rising Sun ! thou blue rejoicing Sky !
Yea, everything that is and will be free !
Bear witness for me, wheresoe'er ye be,
With what deep worship I have still adored
The spirit of divinest Liberty.

II.

When France in wrath her giant limbs upreared,
And with that oath, which smote air, earth, and sea,
Stamped her strong foot, and said she would be free,
Bear witness for me, how I hoped and feared !

With what a joy my lofty gratulation
Unawed I sang, amid a slavish band :
And when to whelm the disenchanted nation,
Like fiends embattled by a wizard's wand,
The Monarchs marched in evil day,
And Briton joined the dire array ;
Though dear her shores and circling ocean,
Though many friendships, many youthful loves
Had swol'n the patriot emotion
And flung a magic light o'er all her hills and groves ;
Yet still my voice, unaltered, sang defeat
To all that braved the tyrant-quelling lance,
And shame too long delayed and vain retreat !
For ne'er, O Liberty ! with partial aim
I dimmed thy light or damped thy holy flame ;
But blessed the pæans of delivered France,
And hung my head and wept at Britain's name.

III.

"And what," I said, "though Blasphemy's loud
scream
With that sweet music of deliverance strove !
Though all the fierce and drunken passions wove
A dance more wild than e'er was maniac's dream !
Ye storms, that round the dawning east assembled,
The Sun was rising, though ye hid his light !"
And when, to soothe my soul, that hoped and
trembled,
The dissonance ceased, and all seemed calm and bright ;
When France her front deep-scarr'd and gory
Concealed with clustering wreaths of glory ;
When, insupportably advancing,

Her arm made mockery of the warrior's tramp ;
While timid looks of fury glancing,
Domestic treason, crushed beneath her fatal stamp,
Writhed like a wounded dragon in his gore ;
Then I reproached my fears that would not flee ;
"And soon," I said, "shall wisdom teach her lore
In the low huts of them that toil and groan !
And, conquering by her happiness alone,
Shall France compel the nations to be free,
Till Love and Joy look round, and call the Earth their
own."

IV.

Forgive me, Freedom ! O forgive those dreams !
I hear thy voice, I hear thy loud lament,
From bleak Helvetia's icy cavern sent—
I hear thy groans upon her blood-stained streams !
Heroes, that for your peaceful country perished,
And ye that, fleeing, spot your mountain-snows
With bleeding wounds ; forgive me, that I cherished
One thought that ever blessed your cruel foes !
To scatter rage, and traitorous guilt,
Where Peace her jealous home had built ;
A patriot-race to disinherit
Of all that made their stormy wilds so dear ;
And with inexpiable spirit
To taint the bloodless freedom of the mountaineer—
O France, that mockest Heaven, adulterous, blind,
And patriot only in pernicious toils,
Are these thy boasts, Champion of human kind ?
To mix with Kings in the low lust of sway,
Yell in the hunt, and share the murderous prey ;
To insult the shrine of Liberty with spoils
From freemen torn ; to tempt and to betray ?

v.

The Sensual and the Dark rebel in vain,
Slaves by their own compulsion ! In mad game
They burst their manacles and wear the name
Of Freedom, graven on a heavier chain !
O Liberty ! with profitless endeavour
Have I pursued thee, many a weary hour ;
But thou nor swell'st the victor's strain, nor ever
Didst breathe thy soul in forms of human power.
Alike from all, howe'er they praise thee,
(Nor prayer, nor boastful name delays thee)
Alike from Priestcraft's harpy minions,
And factious Blasphemy's obscener slaves,
Thou speedest on thy subtle pinions,
The guide of homeless winds, and playmate of the waves !
And there I felt thee !—on that sea-cliff's verge,
Whose pines, scarce travelled by the breeze above,
Had made one murmur with the distant surge !
Yes, while I stood and gazed, my temples bare,
And shot my being through earth, sea, and air,
Possessing all things with intensest love,
O Liberty ! my spirit felt thee there.



DEJECTION : AN ODE.

Late, late yestreen I saw the new Moon,
With the old Moon in her arms ;
And I fear, I fear, my Master dear !
We shall have a deadly storm.

BALLAD OF SIR PATRICK SPENCE.

I.

WELL ! If the Bard was weather-wise, who made
The grand old ballad of Sir Patrick Spence,
This night, so tranquil now, will not go hence
Unroused by winds, that ply a busier trade
Than those which mould yon cloud in lazy flakes,
Or the dull sobbing draft, that moans and rakes
Upon the string of this Eolian lute,
Which better far were mute,
For lo ! the New-moon winter-bright !
And o'erspread with phantom light,
(With swimming phantom light o'erspread
But rimmed and circled by a silver thread)
I see the old Moon in her lap, foretelling
The coming on of rain and squally blast.
And oh ! that even now the gust were swelling,
And the slant night-shower driving loud and fast !
Those sounds which oft have raised me, whilst they awed,
And sent my soul abroad,
Might now perhaps their wonted impulse give,
Might startle this dull pain, and make it move and live !

II.

A grief without a pang, void, dark, and drear,
A stifled, dowsy, unimpassioned grief,

Which finds no natural outlet, no relief,
In word, or sigh, or tear—
O Lady ! in this wan and heartless mood,
To other thoughts by yonder throble woo'd,
All this long eve, so balmy and serene,
Have I been gazing on the western sky, .
And its peculiar tint of yellow green :
And still I gaze—and with how blank an eye !
And those thin clouds above, in flakes and bars,
That give away their motion to the stars ;
Those stars, that glide behind them or between,
Now sparkling, now bedimmed, but always seen ;
Yon crescent Moon as fixed as if it grew
In its own cloudless, starless lake of blue ;
I see them all so excellently fair,
I see, not feel, how beautiful they are !

III.

My genial spirits fail ;
And what can these avail
To lift the smothering weight from off my breast ?
It were a vain endeavour,
Though I should gaze for ever
On that green light that lingers in the west :
I may not hope from outward forms to win
The passion and the life, whose fountains are within

IV.

O Lady ! we receive but what we give,
And in our life alone does nature live :
Ours is her wedding-garment, ours her shroud !
And would we aught behold, of higher worth,

Than that inanimate cold world allowed
To the poor loveless ever-anxious crowd,
Ah ! from the soul itself must issue forth,
A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud
Enveloping the Earth—
And from the soul itself must there be sent
A sweet and potent voice, of its own birth,
Of all sweet sounds the life and element.

V.

O pure of heart ! thou need'st not ask of me
What this strong music in the soul may be !
What, and wherein it doth exist,
This light, this glory, this fair luminous mist,
This beautiful and beauty-making power.
Joy, virtuous Lady ! Joy that ne'er was given,
Save to the pure, and in their purest hour,
Life, and Life's effluence, cloud at once and shower.
Joy, Lady ! is the spirit and the power,
Which wedding Nature to us gives in dower,
A new Earth and new Heaven,
Undreamt of by the sensual and the proud—
Joy is the sweet voice, Joy the luminous cloud—
We in ourselves rejoice !
And thence flows all that charms or ear or sight,
All melodies the echoes of that voice,
All colours a suffusion from that light.

VI.

There was a time when, though my path was rough,
This joy within me dallied with distress,

And all misfortunes were but as the stuff

Whence Fancy made me dreams of happiness :
For Hope grew round me, like the twining vine,
And fruits, and foliage, not my own, seemed mine.
But now afflictions bow me down to earth :
Nor care I that they rob me of my mirth,

But oh ! each visitation
Suspends what nature gave me at my birth,
My shaping spirit of Imagination.

For not to think of what I needs must feel,
But to be still and patient, all I can ;
And haply by abstruse research to steal

From my own nature all the natural man—
This was my sole resource, my only plan :
Till that which suits a part infects the whole,
And now is almost grown the habit of my soul.

VII.

Hence, viper thoughts, that coil around my mind,
Reality's dark dream !

I turn from you, and listen to the wind,
Which long has raved unnoticed. What a scream
Of agony by torture lengthened out
That lute sent forth ! Thou Wind, that ravest without,

Bare craig, or mountain-tairn, or blasted tree,
Or pine-grove whither woodman never clomb,
Or lonely house, long held the witches' home,

Methinks were fitter instruments for thee,
Mad Lutanist ! who in this month of showers,
Of dark brown gardens, and of peeping flowers,
Mak'st Devils' yule, with worse than wintry song,
The blossoms, buds, and timorous leaves among.

Thou Actor, perfect in all tragic sounds !

Thou mighty Poet, e'en to frenzy bold !

What tell'st thou now about ?

'Tis of the rushing of a host in rout,

With groans of trampled men, with smarting wounds—
At once they groan with pain, and shudder with the cold !
But hush ! there is a pause of deepest silence !

And all that noise, as of a rushing crowd,
With groans, and tremulous shudderings—all is over—
It tells another tale, with sounds less deep and loud !

A tale of less affright,

And tempered with delight,

As Otway's self had framed the tender lay,

'Tis of a little child

Upon a lonesome wild,

Not far from home, but she hath lost her way :

And now moans low in bitter grief and fear,

And now screams loud, and hopes to make her mother
hear.

VIII.

'Tis midnight, but small thoughts have I of sleep :

Full seldom may my friend such vigils keep !

Visit her, gentle Sleep ! with wings of healing,

And may this storm be but a mountain-birth,

May all the stars hang bright above her dwelling,

Silent as though they watched the sleeping Earth !

With light heart may she rise,

Gay fancy, cheerful eyes,

Joy lift her spirit, joy attune her voice ;

To her may all things live, from pole to pole,

Their life the eddying of her living soul !

O simple spirit, guided from above,

Dear Lady ! friend devoutest of my choice,

Thus mayest thou ever, evermore rejoice.

ODE TO GEORGIANA,

DUCHESS OF DEVONSHIRE, ON THE TWENTY-FOURTH
STANZA IN HER "PASSAGE OVER MOUNT GOTTHARD."

"And hail the chapel! hail the platform wild
Where Tell directed the avenging dart,
With well-strung arm, that first preserved his child,
Then aimed the arrow at the tyrant's heart."

SPLENDOUR'S fondly fostered child!
And did you hail the platform wild,
Where once the Austrian fell
Beneath the shaft of Tell!
O Lady, nurs'd in pomp and pleasure!
Whence learn'd you that heroic measure?

Light as a dream your days their circlets ran,
From all that teaches brotherhood to Man
Far, far removed! from want, from hope, from fear!
Enchanting music lulled your infant ear,
Obeisance, praises soothed your infant heart:
Emblazonments and old ancestral crests,
With many a bright obtrusive form of art,
Detained your eye from nature: stately vests,
That veiling strove to deck your charms divine,
Rich viands and the pleasurable wine,
Were yours unearned by toil; nor could you see
The unenjoying toiler's misery,
And yet, free Nature's uncorrupted child,
You hailed the chapel and the platform wild,
Where once the Austrian fell
Beneath the shaft of Tell!

O Lady, nursed in pomp and pleasure !
Whence learn'd you that heroic measure ?

There crowd your finely-fibred frame,
All living faculties of bliss ;
And Genius to your cradle came,
His forehead wreathed with lambent flame,
And bending low, with godlike kiss
Breath'd in a more celestial life ;
But boasts not many a fair compeer,
A heart as sensitive to joy and fear ?
And some, perchance, might wage an equal strife,
Some few, to nobler being wrought,
Co-rivals in the nobler gift of thought.
Yet these delight to celebrate
Laurelled war and plumy state ;
Or in verse and music dress
Tales of rustic happiness—
Pernicious tales ! insidious strains !
That steel the rich man's breast,
And mock the lot unblest,
The sordid vices and the abject pains,
Which evermore must be
The doom of ignorance and penury !
But you, free Nature's uncorrupted child,
You hailed the chapel and the platform wild,
Where once the Austrian fell
Beneath the shaft of Tell !
O Lady, nursed in pomp and pleasure !
Whence learn'd you that heroic measure ?

You were a mother ! That most holy name,
Which Heaven and Nature bless,

I may not vilely prostitute to those
Whose infants owe them less
Than the poor caterpillar owes
Its gaudy parent fly.
You were a mother ! at your bosom fed
The babes that loved you. You, with laughing eye,
Each twilight-thought, each nascent feeling read,
Which you yourself created. Oh ! delight !
A second time to be a mother,
Without the mother's bitter groans :
Another thought, and yet another,
By touch, or taste, by looks or tones
O'er the growing sense to roll,
The mother of your infant's soul !
The Angel of the Earth, who, while he guides
His chariot-planet round the goal of day,
All trembling gazes on the eye of God,
A moment turned his awful face away ;
And as he viewed you, from his aspect sweet
New influences in your being rose,
Blest intuitions and communions fleet
With living Nature, in her joys and woes !
Thenceforth your soul rejoiced to see
The shrine of social Liberty !
O beautiful ! O Nature's child !
'Twas thence you hailed the platform wild,
Where once the Austrian fell
Beneath the shaft of Tell !
O Lady, nursed in pomp and pleasure !
Thence learn'd you that heroic measure.

ODE TO TRANQUILLITY.

TRANQUILLITY ! thou better name
Than all the family of Fame !
Thou ne'er wilt leave my riper age
To low intrigue, or factious rage ;
For oh ! dear child of thoughtful Truth,
To thee I gave my early youth,
And left the bark, and blest the steadfast shore,
Ere yet the tempest rose and scared me with its roar.

Who late and lingering seeks thy shrine,
On him but seldom, Power divine
Thy spirit rests ! Satiety
And Sloth, poor counterfeits of thee,
Mock the tired worldling. Idle hope
And dire remembrance interlope,
To vex the feverish slumbers of the mind :
The bubble floats before, the spectre stalks behind.

But me thy gentle hand will lead
At morning through the accustomed mead,
And in the sultry summer's heat
Will build me up a mossy seat ;
And when the gust of Autumn crowds,
And breaks the busy moonlight clouds,
Thou best the thought canst raise, the heart attune,
Light as the busy clouds, calm as the gliding moon.

The feeling heart, the searching soul,
To thee I dedicate the whole !

And while within myself I trace
The greatness of some future race,
Aloof with hermit-eye I scan
The present works of present man—
A wild and dream-like trade of blood and guile,
Too foolish for a tear, too wicked for a smile !

AN ODE TO THE RAIN.

COMPOSED BEFORE DAYLIGHT, ON THE MORNING APPOINTED
FOR THE DEPARTURE OF A VERY WORTHY, BUT NOT VERY
PLEASANT VISITOR, WHOM IT WAS FEARED THE RAIN MIGHT
DETAIN.

I KNOW it is dark ; and though I have lain,
Awake, as I guess, an hour or twain,
I have not once opened the lids of my eyes,
But I lie in the dark, as a blind man lies.
O Rain ! that I lie listening to,
You're but a doleful sound at best :
I owe you little thanks, 'tis true,
For breaking thus my needful rest !
Yet if, as soon as it is light,
O Rain ! you will but take your flight,
I'll neither rail, nor malice keep,
Though sick and sore for want of sleep.

But only now, for this one day,
Do go, dear Rain ! do go away !
O Rain ! with your dull two-fold sound,
The clash hard by, and the murmur all round !
You know, if you know aught, that we,
Both night and day, but ill agree :

For days and months, and almost years,
Have limped on through this vale of tears,
Since body of mine, and rainy weather,
Have lived on easy terms together.
Yet if, as soon as it is light,
O Rain ! you will but take your flight,
Though you should come again to-morrow,
And bring with you both pain and sorrow ;
Though stomach should sicken and knees should
swell—
I'll nothing speak of you but well.
But only now, for this one day,
Do go, dear Rain ! do go away !

Dear Rain ! I ne'er refused to say
You're a good creature in your way ;
Nay, I could write a book myself,
Would fit a parson's lower shelf,
Showing how very good you are.—
What then ? sometimes it must be fair !
And if sometimes, why not to-day ?
Do go, dear Rain ! do go away !

Dear Rain ! if I've been cold and shy,
Take no offence ! I'll tell you why.
A dear old Friend e'en now is here,
And with him came my sister dear ;
After long absence now first met,
Long months by pain and grief beset—
With three dear friends ! in truth we groan—
Impatiently to be alone.
We three, you mark ! and not one more !
The strong wish makes my spirit sore.

We have so much to talk about,
So many sad things to let out ;
So many tears in our eye-corners,
Sitting like little Jacky Horners—
In short, as soon as it is day,
Do go, dear Rain ! do go away !

And this I'll swear to you, dear Rain !
Whenever you shall come again,
Be you as dull as e'er you could,
(And by-the-by, 'tis understood,
You're not so pleasant as you're good)
Yet, knowing well your worth and place,
I'll welcome you with cheerful face ;
And though you stayed a week or more,
Were ten times duller than before ;
Yet with kind heart, and right good-will,
I'll sit and listen to you still ;
Nor should you go away, dear Rain !
Uninvited to remain.
But only now, for this one day,
Do go, dear Rain ! do go away !

A DAY DREAM.

MY eyes make pictures, when they are shut—
I see a fountain, large and fair,
A willow and a ruined hut,
And thee, and me, and Mary there.
O Mary ! make thy gentle lap our pillow !
Bend o'er us, like a bower, my beautiful green willow !

A wild rose roofs the ruined shed,
And that and summer well agree :
And lo ! where Mary leans her head,
Two dear names carved upon the tree !
And Mary's tears, they are not tears of sorrow :
Our sister and our friend will both be here to-morrow.

'Twas day ! But now few, large, and bright
The stars are round the crescent moon !
And now it is a dark warm night,
The balmiest of the month of June !
A glow-worm fallen, and on the marge remounting
Shines, and its shadow shines, fit stars for our sweet
fountain.

O ever—ever be thou blest !
For dearly, Asra, love I thee !
This brooding warmth across my breast,
This depth of tranquil bliss—ah me !
Fount, tree, and shed are gone, I know not whither,
But in one quiet room we three are still together.

The shadows dance upon the wall,
By the still-dancing fire-flames made ;
And now they slumber, moveless all !
And now they melt to one deep shade !
But not from me shall this mild darkness steal thee :
I dream thee with mine eyes, and at my heart I feel thee !

Thine eyelash on my cheek doth play—
'Tis Mary's hand upon my brow !
But let me check this tender lay
Which none may hear but she and thou !
Like the still hive at quiet midnight humming,
Murmur it to yourselves, ye two beloved women !

WORK WITHOUT HOPE.

LINES COMPOSED 21ST FEBRUARY 1827.

ALL Nature seems at work. Slugs leave their lair—
The bees are stirring—birds are on the wing—
And Winter slumbering in the open air,
Wears on his smiling face a dream of Spring !
And I, the while, the sole unbusy thing,
Nor honey make, nor pair, nor build, nor sing.

Yet well I ken the banks where amaranths blow,
Have traced the fount whence streams of nectar flow.
Bloom, O ye amaranths ! bloom for whom ye may,
For me ye bloom not ! Glide, rich streams, away !
With lips unbrighten'd, wreathless brow, I stroll :
And would you learn the spells that drowse my soul ?
Work without hope draws nectar in a sieve,
And hope without an object cannot live.

THE GARDEN OF BOCCACCIO.

OF late, in one of those most weary hours,
When life seems emptied of all genial powers,
A dreary mood, which he who ne'er has known
May bless his happy lot, I sate alone ;
And, from the numbing spell to win relief,
Call'd on the past for thought of glee or grief.

In vain ! bereft alike of grief and glee,
I sate and cow'r'd o'er my own vacancy !
And as I watch'd the dull continuous ache,
Which, all else slumb'ring, seem'd alone to wake ;
O Friend ! long wont to notice yet conceal,
And soothe by silence what words cannot heal,
I but half saw that quiet hand of thine
Place on my desk this exquisite design,
Boccaccio's Garden and its faery,
The love, the joyaunce, and the gallantry !
An Idyll, with Boccaccio's spirit warm,
Framed in the silent poesy of form.
Like flocks adown a newly-bathed steep
Emerging from a mist ; or like a stream
Of music soft that not dispels the sleep,
But casts in happier moulds the slumberer's dream,
Gazed by an idle eye with silent might
The picture stole upon my inward sight.
A tremulous warmth crept gradual o'er my chest,
As though an infant's finger touch'd my breast.
And one by one (I know not whence) were brought
All spirits of power that most had stirr'd my thought
In selfless boyhood, on a new world tost
Of wonder, and in its own fancies lost ;
Or charm'd my youth, that, kindled from above,
Loved ere it loved, and sought a form for love ;
Or lent a lustre to the earnest scan
Of manhood, musing what and whence is man !
Wild strain of Scalds, that in the sea-worn caves
Rehearsed their war-spell to the winds and waves ;
Or fateful hymn of those prophetic maids,
That call'd on Hertha in deep forest glades ;
Or minstrel lay, that cheer'd the baron's feast ;
Or rhyme of city pomp, of monk and priest,

Judge, mayor, and many a guild in long array,
To high-church pacing on the great saint's day.
And many a verse which to myself I sang,
That woke the tear yet stole away the pang,
Of hopes which in lamenting I renew'd.
And last, a matron now, of sober mien,
Yet radiant still and with no earthly sheen,
Whom as a faery child my childhood woo'd
Even in my dawn of thought—Philosophy;
Though then unconscious of herself, pardie,
She bore no other name than Poesy;
And, like a gift from heaven, in life's glee,
That had but newly left a mother's knee,
Prattled and play'd with bird, and flower, and
stone,

As if with elfin playfellows well known,
And life reveal'd to innocence alone.
Thanks, gentle artist ! now I can descry
Thy fair creation with a mastering eye,
And all awake ! And now in fix'd gaze stand,
Now wander through the Eden of thy hand ;
Praise the green arches, on the fountain clear
See fragment shadows of the crossing deer ;
And with that serviceable nymph I stoop
The crystal from its restless pool to scoop.
I see no longer ! I myself am there,
Sit on the ground-sward, and the banquet share.
'Tis I, that sweep that lute's love-echoing strings,
And gaze upon the maid who gazing sings :
Or pause and listen to the tinkling bells
From the high tower, and think that there she
dwells.

With old Boccaccio's soul I stand possest,
And breathe an air like life, that swells my chest.

The brightness of the world, O thou once free,
And always fair, rare land of courtesy !
O Florence ! with the Tuscan fields and hills,
And famous Arno, fed with all their rills ;
Thou brightest star of star-bright Italy !
Rich, ornate, populous, all treasures thine,
The golden corn, the olive, and the vine.
Fair cities, gallant mansions, castles old
And forests, where beside his leafy hold
The sullen boar hath heard the distant horn,
And whets his tusks against the gnarled thorn ;
Palladian palace with its storied halls ;
Fountains, where Love lies listening to their falls ;
Gardens, where flings the bridge its airy span,
And Nature makes her happy home with man ;
Where many a gorgeous flower is duly fed
With its own rill, on its own spangled bed,
And wreathes the marble urn, or leans its head,
A mimic mourner, that with veil withdrawn
Weeps liquid gems, the presents of the dawn—
Thine all delights, and every muse is thine ;
And more than all, the embrace and intertwine
Of all with all in gay and twinkling dance !
'Mid gods of Greece and warriors of romance,
See ! Boccace sits, unfolding on his knees
The new-found roll of old Mæonides ;
But from his mantle's fold, and near the heart,
Peers Ovid's holy book of Love's sweet smart !

O all-enjoying and all-blending sage,
Long be it mine to con thy mazy page,
Where, half-concealed, the eye of fancy views
Fauns, nymphs, and winged saints, all gracious to thy
muse !

Still in thy garden let me watch their pranks,
And see in Dian's vest between the ranks
Of the trim vines, some maid that half believes
The vestal fires, of which her lover grieves,
With that sly satyr peeping through the leaves !

THE PANG MORE SHARP THAN ALL.

AN ALLEGORY.

I.

HE too has flitted from his secret nest,
Hope's last and dearest Child without a name !—
Has flitted from me, like the warmthless flame,
That makes false promise of a place of rest
To the tir'd Pilgrim's still believing mind ;
Or like some Elfin Knight in kingly court,
Who having won all guerdons in his sport.
Glides out of view, and whither none can find !

II.

Yes ! He hath flitted from me—with what aim,
Or why, I know not ! 'Twas a home of bliss,
And He was innocent, as the pretty shame
Of babe, that tempts and shuns the menaced kiss,
From its twy-cluster'd hiding place of snow !
Pure as the babe, I ween, and all aglow
As the dear hopes, that swell the mother's breast—

Her eyes down-gazing o'er her clasped charge—
Yet gay as that twice happy father's kiss,
That well might glance aside, yet never miss,
Where the sweet mark emboss'd so sweet a targe—
Twice wretched he who hath been doubly blest !

III.

Like a loose blossom on a gusty night
He flitted from me—and has left behind
(As if to them his faith he ne'er did plight)
Of either sex and answerable mind
Two playmates, twin-births of his foster-dame ;
The one a steady lad (Esteem he hight)
And Kindness is the gentler sister's name.
Dim likeness now, tho' fair she be and good
Of that bright Boy who hath us all forsook ;
But in his full-eyed aspect when she stood,
And while her face reflected every look,
And in reflection kindled—she became
So like Him, that almost she seem'd the same !

IV.

Ah ! He is gone, and yet will not depart !
Is with me still, yet I from Him exil'd !
For still their lives within my secret heart
The magic image of the magic Child,
Which there He made up-grow by his strong art
As in that crystal orb—wise Merlin's feat—
The wondrous " World of Glass," wherein inisld
All long'd-for things their beings did repeat—
And there He left it, like a Sylph beguiled,
To live and yearn and languish incomplete !

V.

Can wit of man a heavier grief reveal ?
Can sharper pang from hate or scorn arise ?
Yes ! one more sharp there is that deeper lies,
Which fond Esteem but mocks when he would heal.
Yet neither scorn nor hate did it devise,
But sad compassion and atoning zeal !
One pang more blighting-keen than hope betray'd !
And this it is my woeful hap to feel,
When at her Brother's hest, the twin-born Maid
With face averted and unsteady eyes,
Her truant playmate's faded robe puts on ;
And inly shrinking foom her own disguise
Enacts the faery Boy that's lost and gone.
O worse than all ! O pang all pangs above
Is Kindness counterfeiting absent Love !

THE BLOSSOMING OF THE SOLITARY DATE
TREE.

A L A M E N T.

I.

BENEATH the blaze of a tropical sun the mountain peaks are the thrones of frost, through the absence of objects to reflect the rays. "What no one with us shares, seems scarce our own." The presence of one,

The best beloved, who loveth me the best,
is for the heart what the supporting air from within is

for the hollow globe with its suspended car. Deprive it of this, and all without, that would have buoyed it aloft even to the seat of the gods, becomes a burthen and crushes it into flatness.

II.

The finer the sense for the beautiful and the lovely, and the fairer and lovelier the object presented to the sense; the more exquisite the individual's capacity of joy, and the more ample his means and opportunities of enjoyment, the more heavily will he feel the ache of solitariness, the more unsubstantial becomes the feast spread around him. What matters it, whether in fact the viands and the ministering graces are shadowy or real, to him who has not hand to grasp nor arms to embrace them?

III.

Imagination ; honourable aims ;
Free commune with the choir that cannot die ;
Science and song ; delight in little things,
The buoyant child surviving in the man ;
Fields, forests, ancient mountains, ocean, sky,
With all their voices—O dare I accuse
My earthly lot as guilty of my spleen,
Or call my destiny niggard ! O no ! no !
It is her largeness, and her overflow,
Which being incomplete, disquieteth me so !

IV.

For never touch of gladness stirs my heart,
But tim'rously beginning to rejoice

Like a blind Arab, that from sleep doth start
In lonesome tent, I listen for thy voice.
Beloved ! 'tis not thine ; thou art not there !
Then melts the bubble into idle air,
And wishing without hope I restlessly despair.

V.

The mother with anticipated glee
Smiles o'er the child, that, standing by her chair
And flatt'ning its round cheek upon her knee,
Looks up, and doth its rosy lips prepare
To mock the coming sounds. At that sweet sight
She hears her own voice with a new delight ;
And if the babe perchance should lisp the notes aright,

VI.

Then is she tenfold gladder than before !
But should disease or chance the darling take,
What then avail those songs, which sweet of yore
Were only sweet for their sweet echo's sake ?
Dear maid ! no prattler at a mother's knee
Was e'er so dearly prized as I prize thee ;
Why was I made for Love and Love denied to me !



THE TWO FOUNTS.

STANZAS ADDRESSED TO A LADY ON HER RECOVERY,
WITH UNBLEMISHED LOOKS, FROM A SEVERE
ATTACK OF PAIN.

'T WAS my last waking thought, how it could be
That thou, sweet friend, such anguish shouldst
endure ;
When straight from Dreamland came a Dwarf, and he
Could tell the cause, forsooth, and knew the cure.

Methought he fronted me with peering look
Fix'd on my heart ; and read aloud in game
The loves and griefs therein, as from a book ;
And utter'd praise like one who wish'd to blame.

In every heart (quoth he) since Adam's sin
Two Founts there are, of suffering and of cheer !
That to let forth, and this to keep within !
But she, whose aspect I find imaged here,

Of Pleasure only will to all dispense,
That Fount alone unlock, by no distress
Choked or turn'd inward, but still issue thence
Unconquer'd cheer, persistent loveliness.

As on the driving cloud the shiny bow,
That gracious thing made up of tears and light,
Mid the wild rack and rain that slants below
Stands smiling forth, unmoved and freshly bright ;

As though the spirits of all lovely flowers,
Inweaving each its wreath and dewy crown,
Or ere they sank to earth in vernal showers,
Had built a bridge to tempt the angels down.

Ev'n so, Eliza ! on that face of thine,
On that benignant face, whose look alone
(The soul's translucence thro' her crystal shrine !)
Has power to soothe all anguish but thine own.

A beauty hovers still, and ne'er takes wing,
But with a silent charm compels the stern
And tort'ring Genius of the bitter spring
To shrink aback, and cower upon his urn.

Who than needs wonder, if (no outlet found
In passion, spleen, or strife) the fount of pain
O'erflowing beats against its lovely mound,
And in wild flashes shoots from heart to brain ?

Sleep, and the Dwarf with that unsteady gleam
On his raised lip, that aped a critic smile,
Had passed : yet I, my sad thoughts to beguile,
Lay weaving on the tissue of my dream ;

Till audibly at length I cried, as though
Thou had'st indeed been present to my eyes,
O sweet, sweet sufferer ; if the case be so,
I pray thee, be less good, less sweet, less wise !

In every look a barbed arrow send,
On those soft lips let scorn and anger live !
Do any thing, rather than thus, sweet friend !
Hoard for thyself the pain thou wilt not give !

LIMBO.

TIS a strange place, this Limbo !—not a Place,
Yet name it so—where time and weary Space
Fettered from flight, with night-mare sense of fleeing,
Strive for their last crepuscular half-being ;
Lank Space, and scytheless Time with branny hands
Barren and soundless as the measuring sands,
Not mark'd by flit of Shades—unmeaning they
As moonlight on the dial of the day !
But that is lovely—looks like human Time,
An old man with a steady look sublime,
That stops his earthly task to watch the skies ;
But he is blind—a statue hath such eyes—
Yet having moonward turn'd his face by chance,
Gazes the orb with moon-like countenance,
With scant white hairs, with foretop bald and high,
He gazes still—his eyeless face all eye—
As 'twere an organ full of silent sight,
His whole face seemeth to rejoice in light !
Lip touching lip, all moveless, bust and limb—
He seems to gaze at that which seems to gaze on him !
No such sweet sights doth Limbo den immature,
Wall'd round, and made a spirit-jail secure,
By the mere horror of blank Naught-at-all,
Whose circumambience doth these ghosts enthrall.
A lurid thought is growthless, dull Privation,
Yet that is but a Purgatory curse ;
Hell knows a fear far worse,
A fear—a future state ; 'tis positive Negation !

LINES COMPOSED IN A CONCERT-ROOM.

NOR cold, nor stern, my soul ! yet I detest
These scented rooms, where, to a gaudy throng,
Heaves the proud harlot her distended breast
In intricacies of laborious song.

These feel not Music's genuine power, nor deign
To melt at Nature's passion-warbled plaint ;
But when the long-breathed singer's uptrilled strain
Bursts in a squall—they gape for wonderment.

Hark ! the deep buzz of vanity and hate !
Scornful, yet envious, with self-torturing sneer
My lady eyes some maid of humbler state,
While the pert captain, or the primmer priest,
Prattles accordant scandal in her ear.

O give me, from this heartless scene released,
To hear our old musician, blind and gray
(Whom stretching from my nurse's arms I kissed),
His Scottish tunes and warlike marches play,
By moonshine, on the balmy summer-night.
The while I dance amid the tedded hay
With merry maids, whose ringlets toss in light.

Or lies the purple evening on the bay
Of the calm glossy lake, O let me hide
Unheard, unseen, behind the alder-trees,
For round their roots the fisher's boat is tied,
On whose trim seat doth Edmund stretch at ease,

And while the lazy boat sways to and fro,
Breathes in his flute sad airs, so wild and slow,
That his own cheek is wet with quiet tears.

But O, dear Anne ! when midnight wind careers,
And the gust pelting on the out-house shed
Makes the cock shrilly on the rain storm crow,
To hear thee sing some ballad full of woe,
Ballad of shipwrecked-sailor floating dead,
Whom his own true-love buried in the sands !
Thee, gentle woman, for thy voice re-measures
Whatever tones and melancholy pleasures
The things of Nature utter ; birds or trees
Or moan of ocean-gale in weedy caves,
Or where the stiff grass 'mid the heath plant waves,
Murmur and music thin of sudden breeze.

LOVE'S APPARITION AND EVANISHMENT.

AN ALLEGORIC ROMANCE.

LIKE a lone Arab, old and blind,
Some caravan had left behind
Who sits besides a ruin'd well,
Where the shy sand-asps bask and swell ;
And now he hangs his aged head aslant,
And listens for a human sound—in vain !
And now the aid, which Heaven alone can grant,
Upturns his eyeless face from Heaven to gain ;

Even thus, in vacant mood, one sultry hour,
 Resting my eye upon a drooping plant,
 With brow low bent, within my garden bower,
 I sate upon the couch of camomile ;
 And—whether 'twas a transient sleep, perchance,
 Flitted across the idle brain, the while
 I watched the sickly calm with aimless scope,
 In my own heart ; or that, indeed a trance,
 Turn'd my eye inward—thee, O genial Hope,
 Love's elder sister ! thee did I behold,
 Drest as a bridesmaid, but all pale and cold,
 With roseless cheek, all pale, and cold, and dim
 Lie lifeless at my feet !
 And then came Love, a sylph, in bridal trim,
 And stood beside my seat ;
 She bent, and kiss'd her sister's lips,
 As she was wont to do—
 Alas ! 'twas but a chilling breath
 Woke just enough of life in death
 To make Hope die anew.

PHANTOM OR FACT?

A DIALOGUE IN VERSE.

AUTHOR.

A LOVELY form there sate beside my bed,
 And such a feeding calm its presence shed,
 A tender love so pure from earthly leaven
 That I ~~unnethe~~ the fancy might control,

'Twas my own spirit newly come from heaven,
Wooing its gentle way into my soul !
But ah ! the change—it had not stirr'd, and yet—
Alas ! that change how fain would I forget !
That shrinking back, like one that had mistook
That weary, wandering, disavowing look !
'Twas all another, feature, look, and frame,
And still, methought, I knew, it was the same !

FRIEND.

This riddling tale, to what does it belong ?
Is't history ? vision ? or an idle song ?
Or rather say at once, within what space
Of time this wild disastrous change took place.

AUTHOR.

Call it a moment's work (and such it seems)
This tale's a fragment from the life of dreams,
But say, that years matured the silent strife,
And 'tis a record from the dream of life.

FANCY IN NUBIBUS ;

OR, THE POET IN THE CLOUDS.

O ! IT is pleasant, with a heart at ease,
Just after sunset, or by moonlight skies,
To make the shifting clouds be what you please,
Or let the easily-persuaded eyes

Own each quaint likeness issuing from the mould
Of a friend's fancy ; or with head bent low
And cheek aslant see rivers flow of gold
'Twixt crimson banks ; and then, a traveller, go
From mount to mount through Cloudland, gorgeous
land !

Or list'ning to the tide, with closed sight,
Be that blind bard, who on the Chian strand
By those deep sounds possessed with inward light,
Beheld the Iliad and the Odyssee
Rise to the swelling of the voiceful sea.

LOVE, HOPE, AND PATIENCE IN EDUCATION.

O'ER wayward childhood would'st thou hold firm rule,
And sun thee in the light of happy faces ;
Love, Hope, and Patience, these must be thy graces,
And in thine own heart let them first keep school.
For as old Atlas on his broad neck places
Heaven's starry globe, and there sustains it—so
Do these upbear the little world below
Of Education—Patience, Love, and Hope.
Methinks, I see them grouped, in seemly show
The straightened arms upraised, the palms aslope,
And robes that, touching as adown they flow,
Distinctly blend, like snow embossed in snow.
O part them never ! If Hope prostrate lie,
Love too will sink and die.
But Love is subtle, and doth proof derive
From her own life that Hope is yet alive ;

And bending o'er with soul transfusing eyes,
And the soft murmurs of the mother dove,
Woos back the fleeting spirit and half-supplies ;
Thus Love repays to Hope what Hope first gave to Love.
Yet haply there will come a weary day,

When overtasked at length
Both Love and Hope beneath the load give way.
Then with a statue's smile, a statue's strength,
Stands the mute sister, Patience, nothing loth,
And both supporting does the work of both.

HUMAN LIFE.

ON THE DENIAL OF IMMORTALITY.

IF dead, we cease to be ; if total gloom
Swallow up life's brief flash for aye, we fare
As summer gusts, of sudden birth and doom,
Whose sound and motion not alone declare,
But are their whole of being ! If the breath
Be life itself, and not its task and tent,
If even a soul like Milton's can know death ;
O Man ! thou vessel purposeless, unmeant,
Yet drone-hive strange of phantom purposes !
Surplus of nature's dread activity,
Which, as she gazed on some high-finished vase,
Retreating slow, with meditative pause,
She formed with restless hands unconsciously !
Blank accident ! nothing's anomaly !
If rootless thus, thus substanceless thy state,

Go, weigh thy dreams, and be thy hopes, thy fears,
The counter-weights !—Thy laughter and thy tears.

Mean but themselves, each fittest to create,
And to repay the other ! Why rejoices

Thy heart with hollow joy for hollow good ?

Why cowl thy face beneath the mourner's hood ?
Why waste thy sighs, and thy lamenting voices,

Image of image, ghost of ghostly elf,
That such a thing as thou feel'st warm or cold ?
Yet what and whence thy gain, if thou withhold

These costless shadows of thy shadowy self ?

Be sad ! be glad ! be neither ! seek, or shun !

Thou hast no reason why ! Thou can'st have none :

Thy being's being is a contradiction.

THE VISIT OF THE GODS.

IMITATED FROM SCHILLER.

NEVER, believe me,
Appear the Immortals,
Never alone :

Scarce had I welcomed the sorrow-beguiler,
Iacchus ! but in came boy Cupid the smiler ;
Lo ! Phœbus the glorious descends from his throne !
They advance, they float in, the Olympians all !

With divinities fills my
Terrestrial hall !

How shall I yield you
Due entertainment,
Celestial quire ?
Me rather, bright guests ! with your wings of up-
buoyance,
Bear aloft to you homes, to your banquets of joyance,
That the roofs of Olympus may echo my lyre !
Hah ! we mount ! on their pinions they waft up my soul !
O give me the nectar !
O fill me the bowl !

Give him the nectar !
Pour out for the poet,
Hebe ! pour free !
Quicken his eyes with celestial dew,
That Styx the detested no more he may view,
And like one of us gods may conceit him to be !
Thanks, Hebe ! I quaff it ! Io Pæan, I cry !
The wine of the Immortals
Forbids me to die !

THEKLA'S SONG.

FROM SCHILLER.

THE cloud doth gather, the greenwood roar,
The damsel paces along the shore ;
The billows they tumble with might, with might ;
And she flings out her voice to the darksome night ;
Her bosom is swelling with sorrow ;

The world it is empty, the heart will die,
There's nothing to wish for beneath the sky :
Thou Holy One, call thy child away !
I've lived and loved, and that was to-day—
Make ready my grave-clothes to-morrow.

SONG.

A SUNNY shaft did I behold,
From sky to earth it slanted :
And poised therein a bird so bold—
Sweet bird, thou wert enchanted !
He sank, he rose, he twinkled, he trolled
Within that shaft of sunny mist ;
His eyes of fire, his beak of gold,
All else of amethyst !

And thus he sang : " Adieu ! adieu !
Love's dreams prove seldom true.
The blossoms, they make no delay :
The sparkling dew-drops will not stay.
Sweet month of May,
We must away ;
Far, far away !
To-day ! to-day ! "



THE KNIGHT'S TOMB.

WHERE is the grave of Sir Arthur O'Kellyn ?
Where may the grave of that good man be !—
By the side of a spring, on the breast of Helvellyn,
Under the twigs of a young birch tree !
The oak that in summer was sweet to hear,
And rustled its leaves in the fall of the year,
And whistled and roared in the winter alone,
Is gone—and the birch in its stead is grown.—
The Knight's bones are dust,
And his good sword rust—
His soul is with the saints, I trust.

TIME, REAL AND IMAGINARY.

AN ALLEGORY.

ON the wide level of a mountain's head
(I knew not where, but 'twas some faery place),
Their pinions, ostrich-like, for sails outspread,
Two lovely children run an endless race,
A sister and a brother !
That far outstripp'd the other ;
Yet ever runs she with reverted face,
And looks and listens for the boy behind :
For he, alas ! is blind !
O'er rough and smooth with even step he pass'd,
And knows not whether he be first or last.

FIRST ADVENT OF LOVE.

○ FAIR is Love's first hope to gentle mind !
As Eve's first star thro' fleecy cloudlet peeping ;
And sweeter than the gentle south-west wind,
O'er willowy meads and shadowed waters creeping,
And Ceres' golden fields—the sultry hind
Meets it with brow uplift, and stays his reaping.

MONODY ON THE DEATH OF CHATTERTON.

○ WHAT a wonder seems the fear of death,
Seeing how gladly we all sink to sleep,
Babes, Children, Youths, and Men,
Night following night for threescore years and ten !
But doubly strange, where life is but a breath
To sigh and pant with, up Want's rugged steep.

Away, Grim Phantom ! Scorpion King, away !
Reserve thy terrors and thy stings display
For coward Wealth and Guilt in robes of State !
Lo ! by the grave I stand of one, for whom
A prodigal Nature and a niggard Doom
(That all bestowing, this withholding all),
Made each chance knell from distant spire or dome
Sound like a seeking Mother's anxious call,
Return, poor Child ! Home, weary Truant, home !

Thee, Chatterton ! these unblest stones protect
From want, and the bleak freezings of neglect.

Too long before the vexing Storm-blast driven
Here hast thou found repose ! beneath this sod !
Thou ! O vain word ! thou dwell'st not with the clod !
Amid the shining Host of the Forgiven
Thou at the throne of Mercy and thy God
The triumphs of redeeming Love dost hymn
(Believe it, O my soul !) to harps of Seraphim.

Yet oft, perforce ('tis suffering Nature's call)
I weep, that heaven-born Genius so should fall ;
And oft, in Fancy's saddest hour, my soul
Averted shudders at the poisoned bowl.
Now groans my sickening heart, as still I view
Thy corse of livid hue ;
Now indignation checks the feeble sigh,
Or flashes through the tear that glistens in mine eye !

Is this the land of song-ennobled line ?
Is this the land, where Genius ne'er in vain
Poured forth his lofty strain ?
Ah me ! yet Spenser, gentlest bard divine,
Beneath chill Disappointment's shade,
His weary limbs in lonely anguish laid ;
And o'er her darling dead
Pity hopeless hung her head,
While " mid the pelting of that merciless storm,"
Sunk to the cold earth Otway's famished form !

Sublime of thought, and confident of fame,
From vales where Avon winds the Minstrel came.
Light-hearted youth ! aye, as he hastes along,
He meditates the future song,
ow dauntless Ælla fray'd the Dacyan foe ;

And while the numbers flowing strong
In eddies whirl, in surges throng,
Exulting in the spirits' genial throe
In tides of power his life-blood seems to flow.

And now his cheeks with deeper ardours flame,
His eyes have glorious meanings, that declare
More than the light of outward day shines there,
A holier triumph and a sterner aim !
Wings grow within him, and he soars above
Or Bard's or Minstrel's lay of war or love.
Friend to the friendless, to the Sufferer health,
He hears the widow's prayer, the good man's praise ;
To scenes of bliss transmutes his fancied wealth,
And young and old shall now see happy days.
On many a waste he bids trim Gardens rise,
Gives the blue sky to many a prisoner's eyes ;
And now in wrath he grasps the patriot steel,
And her own iron rod he makes Oppression feel.

Sweet Flower of Hope ! free Nature's genial child !
That didst so fair disclose thy early bloom,
Filling the wide air with a rich perfume !
For thee in vain all heavenly aspects smiled ;
From the hard world brief respite could they win—
The frost nipped sharp without, the canker preyed
within !

Ah ! where are fled the charms of vernal Grace,
And Joy's wild gleams that lightened o'er thy face !
Youth of tumultuous soul, and haggard eye !
Thy wasted form, thy hurried steps I view,
On thy wan forehead starts the lethal dew,
And oh ! the anguish of that shuddering sigh !

Such were the struggles of the gloomy hour,
When Care, of withered brow,
Prepared the poison's death-cold power :
Already to thy lips was raised the bowl,
When near thee stood Affection meek
(Her bosom bare, and wildly pale her cheek).
Thy sullen gaze she bade thee roll
On scenes that well might melt thy soul ;
Thy native cot she flashed upon thy view,
Thy native cot, where still, at close of day,
Peace smiling sate, and listened to thy lay ;
Thy Sister's shrieks she bade thee hear,
And mark thy Mother's thrilling tear ;
See, see her breast's convulsive throe,
Her silent agony of woe !
Ah ! dash the poisoned chalice from thy hand !

And thou had'st dashed it, at her soft command,
But that Despair and Indignation rose,
And told again the story of thy woes ;
Told the keen insult of the unfeeling heart ;
The dread dependence on the low-born mind ;
Told every pang, with which thy soul must smart,
Neglect, and grinning Scorn, and Want combined !
Recoiling quick, thou bad'st the friend of pain
Roll the black tide of Death through every freezing
vein !

O Spirit blest
Whether the Eternal's throne around,
Amidst the blaze of Seraphim,
Thou pourest forth the grateful hymn ;
Or soaring thro' the blest domain
Enrapturest Angels with thy strain—

Grant me, like thee, the lyre to sound,
Like thee with fire divine to glow ;
But ah ! when rage the waves of woe,
Grant me with firmer breast to meet their hate,
And soar beyond the storm with upright eye elate !
Ye woods ! that wave o'er Avon's rocky steep,
To Fancy's ear sweet is your murmuring deep,
For here she loves the cypress wreath to weave,
Watching, with wistful eye, the saddening tints of eve.
Here, far from men, amid this pathless grove,
In solemn thought the Minstrel wont to rove,
Like star-beam on the slow sequestered tide
Lonè-glittering, thro' the high tree branching wide.

And here, in Inspiration's eager hour,
When most the big soul feels the mastering power,
These wilds, these caverns roaming o'er,
Round which the screaming sea-gulls soar,
With wild unequal steps he passed along,
Oft pouring on the winds a broken song :
Anon, upon some rough rock's fearful brow
Would pause abrupt—and gaze upon the waves below.

Poor Chatterton ! he sorrows for thy fate
Who would have praised and loved thee ere too late.
Poor Chatterton ! farewell ! of darkest hues
This chaplet cast I on thy unshaped tomb ;
But dare no longer on the sad theme muse,
Lest kindred woes persuade a kindred doom :
For oh ! big gall-drops, shook from Folly's wing,
Have blackened the fair promise of my spring ;
And the stern Fate transpierced with viewless dart
The last pale Hope that shivered at my heart !

Hence, gloomy thoughts ! no more my soul shall
dwell

On joys that were ! No more endure to weigh
The shame and anguish of the evil day,
Wisely forgetful ! O'er the ocean swell
Sublime of hope I seek the cottaged dell
Where Virtue calm with careless step may stray ;
And, dancing to the moonlight roundelay,
The wizard Passions weave a holy spell !

O Chatterton ! that thou wert yet alive !
Sure thou would'st spread the canvas to the gale,
And love with us the tinkling team to drive
O'er peaceful Freedom's undivided dale ;
And we, at sober eve, would round thee throng,
Would hang, enraptured, on thy stately song,
And greet with smiles the young-eyed Poesy
All deftly masked, as hoar Antiquity.

Alas, vain Phantasies ! the fleeting brood
Of Woe self-solaced in her dreamy mood !
Yet will I love to follow the sweet dream,
Where Susquehanna pours his untamed stream :
And on some hill, whose forest-frowning side
Waves o'er the murmurs of his calmer tide,
Will raise a solemn Cenotaph to thee,
Sweet Harper of time-shrouded Minstre ! !
And there, soothed sadly by the dirgeful wind,
Muse on the sore ills I had left behind.



SONNET.

NOT always should the tear's ambrosial dew
Roll its soft anguish down thy furrowed cheek!
Not always heaven-breathed tones of suppliance meek
Beseech thee, Mercy! Yon dark Scowler view,
Who with proud words of dear-loved Freedom came—
More blasting than the mildew from the South!
And kissed his country with Iscariot mouth
(Ah! foul apostate from his Father's fame!)
Then fixed her on the cross of deep distress,
And at safe distance marks the thirsty lance
Pierce her big side! But O! if some strange trance
The eyelids of thy stern-browed Sister press,
Seize, Mercy! thou more terrible the brand,
And hurl her thunderbolts with fiercer hand!

SONNET.

NOT Stanhope! with the Patriot's doubtful name
I mock thy worth—Friend of the Human
Race!
Since, scorning Faction's low and partial aim,
Aloof thou wendest in thy stately pace,
Thyself redeeming from that leprous stain,
Nobility: and aye unterrify'd
Pourest thine Abdiel warnings on the train
That sit complotting with rebellious pride

'Gainst her, who from the Almighty's bosom leapt
With whirlwind arm, fierce Minister of Love !
Wherefore, ere Virtue o'er thy tomb hath wept,
Angels shall lead thee to the Throne above :
And thou from forth its clouds shalt hear the voice,
Champion of Freedom and her God ! rejoice !

SONNET.

TO THE AUTUMNAL MOON.

MILD Splendour of the various-vested Night !
Mother of wildly-working visions ! hail !
I watch thy gliding, while with watery light
Thy weak eye glimmers through a fleecy veil ;
And when thou lovest thy pale orb to shroud
Behind the gathered blackness lost on high ;
And when thou dartest from the wind-rent cloud
Thy placid lightning o'er the awakened sky.
Ah, such is Hope ! as changeful and as fair !
Now dimly peering on the wistful sight ;
Now hid behind the dragon-winged Despair :
But soon emerging in her radiant might
She o'er the sorrow-clouded breast of Care
Sails, like a meteor kindling in its flight.



SONNET.

TO THE AUTHOR OF "THE ROBBERS."

SCHILLER ! that hour I would have wished to die,
If through the shuddering midnight I had sent
From the dark dungeon of the tower time-rent
That fearful voice, a famished Father's cry—
Lest in some after moment aught more mean
Might stamp me mortal ! A triumphant shout
Black Horror screamed, and all her goblin rout
Diminished shrunk from the more withering scene !
Ah ! Bard tremendous in sublimity !
Could I behold thee in thy loftier mood
Wandering at eve with finely frenzied eye
Beneath some vast old tempest-swinging wood !
Awhile with mute awe gazing I would brood :
Then weep aloud in a wild ecstasy !

HYMN

BEFORE SUN-RISE, IN THE VALE OF CHAMOUNI.

Besides the rivers Arve and Arveiron, which have their sources in the foot of Mont Blanc, five conspicuous torrents rush down its sides ; and within a few paces of the Glaciers, the Gentiana Major grows in immense numbers with its "flowers of loveliest blue."

HAST thou a charm to stay the morning-star
In his steep course ? So long he seems to pause
On thy bald awful head, O sovran Blanc !
The Arve and Arveiron at thy base

Rave ceaselessly ; but thou, most awful Form !
Risest from forth thy silent sea of pines,
How silently ! Around thee and above
Deep in the air and dark, substantial, black,
An ebon mass : methinks thou piercest it,
As with a wedge ! But when I look again,
It is thine own calm home, thy crystal shrine,
Thy habitation from eternity !
O dread and silent Mount ! I gazed upon thee,
Till thou, still present to the bodily sense,
Didst vanish from my thought : entranced in prayer
I worshipped the Invisible alone.

Yet, like some sweet beguiling melody,
So sweet, we know not we are listening to it,
Thou, the meanwhile, was blending with my thought,
Yea, with my life and life's own secret joy :
Till the dilating Soul, enwrapt, transfused,
Into the mighty vision passing—there
As in her natural form, swelled vast to Heaven !

Awake, my soul ! not only passive praise
Thou owest ! not alone these swelling tears,
Mute thanks and secret ecstasy ! Awake,
Voice of sweet song ! Awake, my Heart, awake !
Green vales and icy cliffs, all joy my Hymn.

Thou first and chief, sole sovran of the Vale !
O struggling with the darkness all the night,
And visited all night by troops of stars,
Or when they climb the sky or when they sink :
Companion of the morning-star at dawn,

Thyself Earth's rosy star, and of the dawn
Co-herald : wake, O wake, and utter praise !
Who sank thy sunless pillars deep in Earth ?
Who filled thy countenance with rosy light ?
Who made thee parent of perpetual streams ?

And you, ye five wild torrents fiercely glad !
Who called you forth from night and utter death,
From dark and icy caverns called you forth,
Down those precipitous, black, jagged Rocks,
For ever shattered and the same for ever ?
Who gave you your invulnerable life,
Your strength, your speed, your fury, and your joy,
Unceasing thunder and eternal foam ?
And who commanded (and the silence came),
Here let the billows stiffen, and have rest ?

Ye ice-falls ! ye that from the mountain's brow
Adown enormous ravines slope amain—
Torrents, methinks, that heard a mighty voice,
And stopped at once amid their maddest plunge !
Motionless torrents ! silent cataracts !
Who made you glorious as the gates of Heaven
Beneath the keen full moon ? Who bade the sun
Clothe you with rainbows ? Who, with living flowers
Of loveliest blue, spread garlands at your feet ?—
God ! let the torrents, like a shout of nations,
Answer ! and let the ice-plains echo, God !
God ! sing ye meadow-streams with gladsome voice !
Ye pine-groves, with your soft and soul-like sounds !
And they too have a voice, yon piles of snow,
And in their perilous fall shall thunder, God !

Ye living flowers that skirt the eternal frost !
Ye wild goats sporting round the eagle's nest !
Ye eagles, play-mates of the mountain-storm !
Ye lightnings, the dread arrows of the clouds !
Ye signs and wonders of the element !
Utter forth God, and fill the hills with praise !

Thou too, hoar Mount ! with thy sky-pointing peaks,
Oft from whose feet the avalanche, unheard,
Shoots downward, glittering through the pure serene
Into the depth of clouds, that veil thy breast—
Thou too again, stupendous Mountain ! thou
That as I raise my head, awhile bowed low
In adoration, upwards from thy base
Slow travelling with dim eyes suffused with tears,
Solemnly seemest, like a vapoury cloud,
To rise before me—Rise, O ever rise,
Rise like a cloud of incense, from the Earth !
Though kingly Spirit throned among the hills,
Thou dread ambassador from Earth to Heaven,
Great hierarch ! tell thou the silent sky
And tell the stars, and tell yon rising sun,
Earth, with her thousand voices, praises God.

THE EOLIAN HARP.

COMPOSED AT CLEVEDON, SOMERSETSHIRE.

MY pensive Sara ! thy soft cheek reclined
Thus on mine arm, most soothing sweet it is
To sit beside our cot, our cot o'ergrown
With white-flowered jasmin, and the broad-leaved myrtle,

(Meet emblems they of Innocence and Love !)
And watch the clouds, that late were rich with light,
Slow saddening round, and mark the star of eve
Serenely brilliant (such should wisdom be)
Shine opposite ! How exquisite the scents
Snatched from yon bean-field ! and the world so hushed !
The stilly murmur of the distant sea
Tells us of silence.

And that simplest lute,
Placed lengthways in the clasping casement, hark !
How by the desultory breeze caressed,
Like some coy maid half yielding to her lover,
It pours such sweet upbraiding, as must needs
Tempt to repeat the wrong ! And now, its strings
Boldlier swept, the long sequacious notes
Over delicious surges sink and rise,
Such a soft floating witchery of sound
As twilight Elfs make, when they at eve
Voyage on gentle gales from Fairy-Land,
Where Melodies round honey-dropping flowers,
Footless and wild, like birds of Paradise !
Nor pause, nor perch, hovering on untamed wing .
O the one life within us and abroad,
Which meets all motion and becomes its soul,
A light in sound, a sound-like power in light,
Rythm in all thought, and joyance everywhere—
Methinks, it should have been impossible
Not to love all things in a world so filled ;
Where the breeze warbles, and the mute still air
Is Music slumbering on her instrument.

And thus, my love ! as on the midway slope
Of yonder hill I stretch my limbs at noon,

Whilst through my half-closed eyelids I behold
The sunbeams dance, like diamonds, on the main,
And tranquil muse upon tranquillity ;
Full many a thought uncalled and undetained,
And many idle flitting phantasies,
Traverse my indolent and passive brain,
As wild and various as the random gales
That swell and flutter on this subject lute !

And what if all of animated nature
Be but organic harps diversely framed,
That tremble into thought, as o'er them sweeps
Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,
At once the Soul of each, and God of All ?

But thy more serious eye a mild reproof
Darts, O beloved woman ! nor such thoughts
Dim and unhallowed dost thou not reject,
And biddest me walk humbly with my God,
Meek daughter in the family of Christ !
Well hast thou said and holily dispraised
These shapings of the unregenerate mind ;
Bubbles that glitter as they rise and break
On vain Philosophy's aye-babbling spring.
For never guiltless may I speak of Him,
The Incomprehensible ! save when with awe
I praise Him, and with faith that inly feels ;
Who with his saving mercies healed me,
A sinful and most miserable man,
Wildered and dark, and gave me to possess
Peace, and this cot, and thee, heart-honoured Maid !

THIS LIME-TREE BOWER MY PRISON.

In the June of 1797 some long-expected friends paid a visit to the author's cottage; and on the morning of their arrival he met with an accident, which disabled him from walking during the whole time of their stay. One evening, when they had left him for a few hours, he composed the following lines in the garden bower.

WELL, they are gone, and here must I remain,
This lime-tree bower my prison! I have lost
Beauties and feelings, such as would have been
Most sweet to my remembrance even when age
Had dimmed mine eyes to blindness! They, meanwhile,
Friends, whom I never more may meet again,
On springy heath, along the hill-top edge,
Wander in gladness, and wind down, perchance,
To that still roaring dell, of which I told;
The roaring dell, o'erwooded, narrow, deep,
And only speckled by the mid-day sun;
Where its slim trunk the ash from rock to rock
Flings arching like a bridge—that branchless ash,
Unsunned and damp, whose few poor yellow leaves
Ne'er tremble in the gale, yet tremble still,
Fanned by the water-fall! and there my friends
Behold the dark green file of long lank weeds,
That all at once (a most fantastic sight!)
Still nod and drip beneath the dripping edge
Of the blue clay-stone.

Now, my friends emerge
Beneath the wide wide Heaven—and view again
The many-steepled tract magnificent
Of hilly fields and meadows, and the sea,
With some fair bark, perhaps, whose sails light up

The slip of smooth clear blue betwixt two Isles
Of purple shadow ! Yes ! they wander on
In gladness all ; but thou, methinks, most glad,
My gentle-hearted Charles ! for thou hast pined
And hungered after nature, many a year,
In the great City pent, winning thy way
With sad yet patient soul, through evil and pain
And strange calamity ! Ah ! slowly sink
Behind the western ridge, thou glorious sun !
Shine in the slant beams of the sinking orb,
Ye purple heath-flowers ! richlier burn, ye clouds !
Live in the yellow light, ye distant groves !
And kindle, thou blue ocean ! So my Friend
Struck with deep joy may stand, as I have stood,
Silent with swimming sense ; yea, gazing round
On the wide landscape, gaze till all doth seem
Less gross than bodily ; and of such hues
As veil the Almighty Spirit, when yet he makes
Spirits perceive his presence.

A delight

Comes sudden on my heart, and I am glad
As I myself were there ! Nor in this bower,
This little lime-tree bower, have I not marked
Much that has soothed me. Pale beneath the blaze
Hung the transparent foliage ; and I watched
Some broad and sunny leaf, and loved to see
The shadow of the leaf and stem above
Dappling its sunshine ! And that walnut-tree
Was richly tinged, and a deep radiance lay
Full on the ancient ivy, which usurps
Those fronting elms, and now, with blackest mass
Makes their dark branches gleam a lighter hue
Through the late twilight ; and though now the bat

Wheels silent by, and not a swallow twitters,
Yet still the solitary humble bee
Sings in the bean-flower ! Henceforth I shall know
That Nature ne'er deserts the wise and pure ;
No plot so narrow, be but Nature there,
No waste so vacant, but may well employ
Each faculty of sense, and keep the heart
Awake to Love and Beauty ! and sometimes
'Tis well to be bereft of promised good,
That we may lift the Soul, and contemplate
With lively joy the joys we cannot share.
My gentle-hearted Charles ! when the last rook
Beat its straight path along the dusky air
Homewards, I blest it ! deeming, its black wing
(Now a dim speck, now vanishing in light)
Had crossed the mighty orb's dilated glory,
While thou stood'st gazing ; or when all was still,
Flew creaking o'er thy head, and had a charm
For thee, my gentle-hearted Charles, to whom
No sound is dissonant which tells of Life.

FROST AT MIDNIGHT.

THE frost performs its secret ministry,
Unhelped by any wind. The owl's cry
Came loud—and hark, again ! loud as before.
The inmates of my cottage, all at rest,
Have left me to that solitude, which suits
Abstruser musings : save that at my side
My cradled infant slumbers peacefully.

'Tis calm indeed ! so calm, that it disturbs
And vexes meditation with its strange
And extreme silentness. Sea, hill, and wood,
This populous village ! Sea, and hill, and wood,
With all the numberless goings on of life
Inaudible as dreams ! the thin blue flame
Lies on my low burnt fire, and quivers not ;
Only that film, which fluttered on the grate,
Still flutters there, the sole unquiet thing.
Methinks, its motion in this hush of nature
Gives it dim sympathies with me who live,
Making it a companionable form,
Whose puny flaps and freaks the idling Spirit
By its own moods interprets, everywhere
Echo or mirror seeking of itself,
And makes a toy of Thought.

But O ! how oft,
How oft, at school, with most believing mind,
Presageful, have I gazed upon the bars,
To watch that fluttering stranger ! and as oft
With unclosed lids, already had I dreamt
Of my sweet birth-place, and the old church-tower,
Whose bells, the poor man's only music, rang
From morn to evening, all the hot Fair-day,
So sweetly, that they stirred and haunted me
With a wild pleasure, falling on mine ear
Most like articulate sounds of things to come !
So gazed I, till the soothing things I dreamt
Lulled me to sleep, and sleep prolonged my dreams !
And so I brooded all the following morn,
Awed by the stern preceptor's face, mine eye
Fixed with mock study on my swimming book :
Save if the door half opened, and I snatched

A hasty glance, and still my heart leaped up,
For still I hoped to see the stranger's face,
Townsmen, or aunt, or sister more beloved,
My playmate when we both were clothed alike !

Dear babe, that sleepest cradled by my side,
Whose gentle breathings, heard in this deep calm,
Fill up the interspersed vacancies
And momentary pauses of the thought !
My babe so beautiful ! it thrills my heart
With tender gladness, thus to look at thee,
And think that thou shalt learn far other lore
And in far other scenes ! For I was reared
In the great city, pent 'mid cloisters dim,
And saw nought lovely but the sky and stars.
But thou, my babe ! shalt wander like a breeze
By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags
Of ancient mountain, and beneath the clouds,
Which image in their bulk both lakes and shores
And mountain crags : so shalt thou see and hear
The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible
Of that eternal language, which thy God
Utters, who from eternity doth teach
Himself in all, and all things in himself.
Great universal Teacher ! he shall mould
Thy spirit, and by giving make it ask.

Therefore all seasons shall be sweet to thee,
Whether the summer clothe the general earth
With greenness, or the redbreast sit and sing
Betwixt the tufts of snow on the bare branch
Of mossy apple-tree, while the nigh thatch
Smokes in the sun-thaw ; whether the eve-drops fall

Heard only in the trances of the blast,
Or if the secret ministry of frost
Shall hang them up in silent icicles,
Quietly shining to the quiet Moon.

THE NIGHTINGALE:

A CONVERSATION POEM. APRIL 1798.

NO cloud, no relique of the sunken day
Distinguishes the West, no long thin slip
Of sullen light, no obscure trembling hues.
Come, we will rest on this old mossy bridge !
You see the glimmer of the stream beneath,
But hear no murmuring : it flows silently,
O'er its soft bed of verdure. All is still,
A balmy night ! and though the stars be dim,
Yet let us think upon the vernal showers
That gladden the green earth, and we shall find
A pleasure in the dimness of the stars.
And hark ! the Nightingale begins its song,
"Most musical, most melancholy" bird !
A melancholy bird ! Oh ! idle thought !
In nature there is nothing melancholy.
But some night-wandering man whose heart was
pierced
With the remembrance of a grievous wrong,
Or slow distemper or neglected love
(And so, poor wretch ! filled all things with himself,
And made all gentle sounds tell back the tale

Of his own sorrow, he, and such as he,
First named these notes a melancholy strain.
And many a poet echoes the conceit ;
Poet who hath been building up the rhyme
When he had better far have stretched his limbs
Beside a brook in mossy forest-dell,
By sun or moonlight, to the influxes
Of shapes and sounds and shifting elements
Surrendering his whole spirit, of his song
And of his fame forgetful ! ' so his fame
Should share in Nature's immortality,
A venerable thing ! and so his song
Should make all Nature lovelier, and itself
Be loved like Nature ! But 'twill not be so ;
And youths and maidens most poetical,
Who lose the deepening twilights of the spring
In ball-rooms and hot theatres, they still
Full of meek sympathy must heave their sighs
O'er Philomela's pity-pleading strains.

My Friend, and thou, our Sister ! we have learnt
A different lore : we may not thus profane
Nature's sweet voices, always full of love
And joyance ! 'Tis the merry Nightingale
That crowds, and hurries, and precipitates
With fast thick warble his delicious notes,
As he were fearful that an April night
Would be too short for him to utter forth
His love-chant, and disburthen his full soul
Of all its music !

And I know a grove
Of large extent, hard by a castle huge,
Which the great lord inhabits not ; and so

This grove is wild with tangling underwood,
And the trim walks are broken up, and grass,
Thin grass and king-cups grow within the paths.
But never elsewhere in one place I knew
So many nightingales ; and far and near,
In wood and thicket, over the wide grove,
They answer and provoke each other's song,
With skirmish and capricious passagings,
And murmurs musical and swift jug jug,
And one low piping sound more sweet than all—
Stirring the air with such a harmony,
That should you close your eyes, you might almost
Forget it was not day ! On moon-lit bushes,
Whose dewy leaflets are but half disclosed,
You may perchance behold them on the twigs,
Their bright, bright eyes, their eyes both bright and
full,
Glistening, while many a glow-worm in the shade
Lights up her love-torch.

A most gentle Maid,
Who dwelleth in her hospitable home
Hard by the castle, and at latest eve
(Even like a Lady vowed and dedicate
To something more than Nature in the grove)
Glides through the pathways ; she knows all their notes,
That gentle Maid ! and oft a moment's space,
What time the moon was lost behind a cloud,
Hath heard a pause of silence ; till the moon
Emerging, hath awakened earth and sky
With one sensation, and these wakeful birds
Have all burst forth in choral minstrelsy,
As if some sudden gale had swept at once
A hundred airy harps ! And she hath watched

Many a nightingale perched giddily
On blossomy twig still swinging from the breeze,
And to that motion tune his wanton song
Like tipsy joy that reels with tossing head.

Farewell, O Warbler ! till to-morrow eve,
And you, my friends ! farewell, a short farewell !
We have been loitering long and pleasantly,
And now for our dear homes.—That strain again !
Full fain it would delay me ! My dear babe,
Who, capable of no articulate sound,
Mars all things with his imitative lisp,
How he would place his hand beside his ear,
His little hand, the small forefinger up,
And bid us listen ! And I deem it wise
To make him Nature's playmate. He knows well
The evening-star ; and once, when he awoke
In most distressful mood (some inward pain
Had made up that strange thing, an infant's dream),
I hurried with him to our orchard-plot,
And he beheld the moon, and, hushed at once,
Suspends his sobs, and laughs most silently,
While his fair eyes, that swam with undropped tears,
Did glitter in the yellow moonbeam ! Well !—
It is a father's tale : But if that Heaven
Should give me life, his childhood shall grow up
Familiar with these songs, that with the night
He may associate joy.—Once more, farewell,
Sweet Nightingale ! Once more, my friends ! farewell.



TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

COMPOSED ON THE NIGHT AFTER HIS RECITATION OF A
POEM ON THE GROWTH OF AN INDIVIDUAL MIND.

FRIEND of the wise ! and teacher of the good !
Into my heart have I received that lay
More than historic, that prophetic lay
Wherein (high theme by thee first sung aright)
Of the foundations and the building up
Of a Human Spirit thou hast dared to tell
What may be told, to the understanding mind
Revealable ; and what within the mind
By vital breathings secret as the soul
Of vernal growth, oft quickens in the heart
Thoughts all too deep for words !

Theme hard as high
Of smiles spontaneous, and mysterious fears
(The first-born they of Reason and twin-birth),
Of tides obedient to external force,
And currents self-determined, as might seem,
Or by some inner power ; of moments awful,
Now in thy inner life, and now abroad,
When power streamed from thee, and thy soul received
The light reflected, as a light bestowed—
Of fancies fair, and milder hours of youth,
Hyblean murmurs of poetic thought
Industrious in its joy, in vales and glens
Native or *outland*, lakes and famous hills !
Or on the *lonely high-road*, when the stars
Were rising ; or by secret mountain-streams,
The guides and the companions of thy way !

Of more than Fancy, of the Social Sense
Distending wide, and man beloved as man,
Where France in all her towns lay vibrating
Like some becalmed bark beneath the burst
Of Heaven's immediate thunder, when no cloud
Is visible, or shadow on the main.
For thou wert there, thine own brows garlanded,
Amid the tremor of a realm aglow,
Amid a mighty nation jubilant,
When from the general heart of human kind
Hope sprang forth like a full-born Deity !
—Of that dear Hope afflicted and struck down,
So summoned homeward, thenceforth calm and sure
From the dread watch-tower of man's absolute self.
With light unwaning on her eyes, to look
Far on—herself a glory to behold,
The Angel of the vision ! Then (last strain)
Of Duty, chosen laws controlling choice,
Action and joy !—An Orphic song indeed,
A song divine of high and passionate thoughts
To their own music chanted !

O great Bard !

Ere yet that last strain dying awed the air,
With steadfast eye I viewed thee in the choir
Of ever-enduring men. The truly great
Have all one age, and from one visible space
Shed influence ! They, both in power and act,
Are permanent, and Time is not with them,
Save as it worketh for them, they in it.
Nor less a sacred roll, than those of old,
And to be placed, as they, with gradual fame
Among the archives of mankind, thy work

Makes audible a linked lay of Truth,
Of Truth profound a sweet continuous lay,
Not learnt, but native, her own natural notes !
Ah ! as I listened with a heart forlorn,
The pulses of my being beat anew :
And even as life returns upon the drowned,
Life's joy rekindling roused a throng of pains—
Keen pangs of Love, awakening as a babe
Turbulent, with an outcry in the heart ;
And fears self-willed, that shunned the eye of hope ;
And hope that scarce would know itself from fear ;
Sense of past youth, and manhood come in vain,
And genius given, and knowledge won in vain ;
And all which I had culled in wood-walks wild,
And all which patient toil had reared, and all,
Commune with thee had opened out—but flowers
Strewed on my corse, and borne upon my bier,
In the same coffin, for the self-same grave !

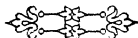
That way no more ! and ill beseems it me,
Who came a welcomer in herald's guise,
Singing of glory, and futurity,
To wander back on such unhealthful road,
Plucking the poisons of self-harm ! And ill
Such intertwine beseems triumphal wreaths.
Strewed before thy advancing !

Nor do thou,
Sage Bard ! impair the memory of that hour
Of thy communion with my nobler mind
By pity or grief, already felt too long !
Nor let my words import more blame than needs.
The tumult rose and ceased : for peace is nigh

Where wisdom's voice has found a listening heart.
Amid the howl of more than wintry storms,
The halcyon hears the voice of vernal hours
Already on the wing.

Eve following eve,
Dear tranquil time, when the sweet sense of Home
Is sweetest ! moments for their own sake hailed
And more desired, more precious for thy song,
In silence listening, like a devout child,
My soul lay passive, by thy various strain
Driven as in surges now beneath the stars,
With momentary stars of my own birth,
Fair constellated foam, still darting off
Into the darkness ; now a tranquil sea,
Outspread and bright, yet swelling to the moon.

And when—O Friend ! my comforter and guide !
Strong in thyself, and powerful to give strength—
Thy long sustained Song finally closed,
And thy deep voice had ceased—yet thou thyself
Wert still before my eyes, and round us both
That happy vision of beloved faces—
Scarce conscious, and yet conscious of its close,
I sate, my being blended in one thought
(Thought was it ? or aspiration ? or resolve ?)
Absorbed, yet hanging still upon the sound—
And when I rose, I found myself in prayer.



TO A FRIEND

WHO HAD DECLARED HIS INTENTION OF WRITING NO
MORE POETRY.

DEAR Charles ! whilst yet thou wert a babe, I ween
That Genius plunged thee in that wizard fount
Hight Castalie : and (sureties of thy faith)
That Pity and Simplicity stood by,
And promised for thee, that thou shouldst renounce
The world's low cares and lying vanities,
Steadfast and rooted in the heavenly Muse,
And washed and sanctified to Poesy.
Yes—thou wert plunged, but with forgetful hand
Held, as by Thetis erst her warrior son :
And with those recreant unbaptised heels
Thou'rt flying from thy bounden minist'ries—
So sore it seems and burthensome a task
To weave unwithering flowers ! But take thou heed :
For thou art vulnerable, wild-eyed boy,
And I have arrows mystically dipt,
Such as may stop thy speed. Is thy Burns dead ?
And shall he die unwept, and sink to earth
“ Without the meed of one melodious tear ? ”
Thy Burns, and Nature's own beloved bard,
Who to the “ Illustrious of his native Land
So properly did look for patronage.”
Ghost of Mæcenæ ! hide thy blushing face !
They snatched him from the sickle and the plough—
To range ale-firkins.

Oh ! for shame return !
dway the Aonian monut,

There stands a lone and melancholy tree,
Whose aged branches to the midnight blast
Make solemn music : pluck its darkest bough,
Ere yet the unwholesome night-dew be exhaled,
And weeping wreath it round thy Poet's tomb.
Then in the outskirts, where pollutions grow,
Pick the rank henbane and the dusky flowers
Of nightshade, or its red and tempting fruit,
These with stopped nostril and glove-guarded hand
Knit in nice intertexture, so to twine
The illustrious brow of Scotch Nobility.

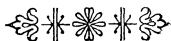
LINES

WRITTEN IN THE ALBUM AT ELBINGERODE, IN THE
HARTZ FOREST.

I STOOD on Brocken's sovran height, and saw
Woods crowding upon woods, hills over hills,
A surging scene, and only limited
By the blue distance. Heavily my way
Downward I dragged through fir groves evermore,
Where bright green moss heaves in sepulchral forms
Speckled with sunshine ; and, but seldom heard,
The sweet bird's song became a hollow sound ;
And the breeze, murmuring indivisibly,
Preserved its solemn murmur most distinct
From many a note of many a waterfall,
And the brook's chatter ; 'mid whose islet stones
The dingy kidling with its tinkling bell
Leaped frolicsome, or old romantic goat

Sat, his white beard slow waving. I moved on
In low and languid mood : for I had found
That outward forms, the loftiest, still receive
Their finer influence from the Life within—
Fair cyphers else : fair, but of import vague
Or unconcerning, where the heart not finds
History or prophecy of friend, or child,
Or gentle maid, our first and early love,
Or father, or the venerable name
Of our adored country ! O thou Queen,
Thou delegated Deity of Earth,
O dear, dear England ! how my longing eye
Turned westward, shaping in the steady clouds
Thy sands and high white cliffs !

My native Land !
Filled with the thought of thee this heart was proud,
Yea, mine eye swam with tears : that all the view
From sovran Brocken, woods and woody hills,
Floated away, like a departing dream,
Feeble and dim ! Stranger, these impulses
Blame thou not lightly ; nor will I profane,
With hasty judgment or injurious doubt,
That man's sublimer spirit, who can feel
That God is everywhere ! the God who framed
Mankind to be one mighty family,
Himself our Father, and the World our Home.



FEARS IN SOLITUDE.

WRITTEN IN APRIL 1798, DURING THE ALARM OF AN
INVASION.

A GREEN and silent spot, amid the hills,
A small and silent dell ! O'er stiller place
No singing sky-lark ever poised himself.
The hills are heathy, save that swelling slope,
Which hath a gay and gorgeous covering on;
All golden with the never-bloomless furze,
Which now blooms most profusely ; but the dell,
Bathed by the mist, is fresh and delicate
As vernal corn-field, or the unripe flax,
When, through its half-transparent stalks, at eve
The level sunshine glimmers with green light.
Oh ! 'tis a quiet spirit-healing nook !
Which all, methinks, would love ; but chiefly he
The humble man, who, in his youthful years,
Knew just so much of folly as had made
His early manhood more securely wise !
Here he might lie on fern or withered heath,
While from the singing-lark (that sings unseen
The minstrelsy that solitude loves best),
And from the sun, and from the breezy air,
Sweet influences trembled o'er his frame ;
And he, with many feelings, many thoughts,
Made up a meditative joy, and found
Religious meanings in the forms of nature !
And so, his senses gradually wrapt
In a half sleep, he dreams of better worlds,
And dreaming hears thee still, O singing-lark ;
That singest like an angel in the clouds !

My God ! it is a melancholy thing
For such a man, who would full fain preserve
His soul in calmness, yet perforce must feel
For all his human brethren—O my God !
It weighs upon the heart, that he must think
What uproar and what strife may now be stirring
This way or that way o'er these silent hills—
Invasion, and the thunder and the shout,
And all the crash of onset ; fear and rage,
And undetermined conflict—even now,
Even now, perchance, and in his native isle :
Carnage and groans beneath this blessed sun !
We have offended, Oh ! my countrymen !
We have offended very grievously,
And been most tyrannous. From east to west
A groan of accusation pierces Heaven !
The wretched plead against us ; multitudes
Countless and vehement, the sons of God,
Our brethren ! Like a cloud that travels on,
Steamed up from Cairo's swamps of pestilence,
Even so, my countrymen ! have we gone forth
And borne to distant tribes slavery and pangs,
And, deadlier far, our vices, whose deep taint
With slow perdition murders the whole man,
His body and his soul ! Meanwhile, at home,
All individual dignity and power
Engulfed in courts, committees, institutions,
Associations, and societies,
A vain, speech-mouthing, speech-reporting guild,
One benefit-club for mutual flattery,
We have drunk up, demure as at a grace,
Pollutions from the brimming cup of wealth ;
Contemptuous of all honourable rule
Yet bartering freedom and the poor man's life

For gold, as at a market ! The sweet words
Of Christian promise, words that even yet
Might stem destruction, were they wisely preached,
Are muttered o'er by men, whose tones proclaim
How flat and wearisome they feel their trade :
Rank scoffers some, but most too indolent
To deem them falsehoods or to know their truth.
Oh ! blasphemous ! the book of life is made
A superstitious instrument, on which
We gabble o'er the oaths we mean to break ;
For all must swear—all and in every place,
College and wharf, council and justice-court ;
All, all must swear, the briber and the bribed,
Merchant and lawyer, senator and priest,
The rich, the poor, the old man and the young ;
All, all make up one scheme of perjury,
That faith doth reel ; the very name of God
Sounds like a juggler's charm ; and, bold with joy,
Forth from his dark and lonely hiding-place,
(Portentous sight !) the owlet Atheism,
Sailing on obscene wings athwart the noon,
Drops his blue-fringed lids, and holds them close,
And hooting at the glorious sun in Heaven,
Cries out, " Where is it ? "

Thankless too for peace
(Peace long preserved by fleets and perilous seas),
Secure from actual warfare, we have loved
To swell the war-whoop, passionate for war !
Alas ! for ages ignorant of all
Its ghastlier workings (famine or blue plague,
Battle, or siege, or flight through wintry snows),
We, this whole people, have been clamorous
For war and bloodshed ; animating sports,

The which we pay for as a thing to talk of,
Spectators and not combatants ! No guess
Anticipative of a wrong unfelt,
No speculation or contingency,
However dim and vague, too vague and dim
To yield a justifying cause ; and forth
(Stuffed out with big preamble, holy names,
And adjurations of the God in Heaven),
We send our mandates for the certain death
Of thousands, and ten thousands ! Boys and
girls,

And women, that would groan to see a child
Pull off an insect's leg, all read of war,
The best amusement for our morning-meal !
The poor wretch, who has learnt his only prayers
From curses, who knows scarcely words enough
To ask a blessing from his Heavenly Father,
Becomes a fluent phraseman, absolute
And technical in victories and defeats,
And all our dainty terms for fratricide ;
Terms which we trundle smoothly o'er our tongues
Like mere abstractions, empty sounds to which
We join no feeling and attach no form !
As if the soldier died without a wound ;
As if the fibres of this godlike frame
Were gored without a pang ; as if the wretch,
Who fell in battle, doing bloody deeds,
Passed off to Heaven, translated and not killed ;
As though he had no wife to pine for him,
No God to judge him ! Therefore, evil days
Are coming on us, O my countrymen !
And what if all-avenging Providence,
Strong and retributive, should make us know
The meaning of our words, force us to feel

The desolation and the agony
Of our fierce doings !

Spare us yet awhile,
Father and God ! O ! spare us yet awhile !
Oh ! let not English women drag their flight
Fainting beneath the burthen of their babes,
Of the sweet infants, that but yesterday
Laughed at the breast ! Sons, brothers, husbands, all
Who ever gazed with fondness on the forms
Which grew up with you round the same fireside,
And all who ever heard the sabbath-bells
Without the infidel's scorn, make yourselves pure !
Stand forth ! be men ! repel an impious foe,
Impious and false, a light yet cruel race,
Who laugh away all virtue, mingling mirth
With deeds of murder ; and still promising
Freedom, themselves too sensual to be free,
Poison life's amities, and cheat the heart
Of faith and quiet hope, and all that soothes
And all that lifts the spirit ! Stand we forth ;
Render them back upon the insulted ocean,
And let them toss as idly on its waves
As the vile sea-weed, which some mountain-blast
Swept from our shores ! And oh ! may we return
Not with a drunken triumph, but with fear,
Repenting of the wrongs with which we stung
So fierce a foe to frenzy !

I have told,
O Britons ! O my brethren ! I have told
Most bitter truth, but without bitterness
Nor deem my zeal or factious or mis-timed ;
For never can true courage dwell with them,

Who, playing tricks with conscience, dare not look
At their own vices. We have been too long
Dupes of a deep delusion ! Some, belike,
Groaning with restless enmity, expect
All change from change of constituted power ;
As if a Government had been a robe,
On which our vice and wretchedness were tagged
Like fancy-points and fringes, with the robe
Pulled off at pleasure. Fondly these attach
A radical causation to a few
Poor drudges of chastising Providence,
Who borrow all their hues and qualities
From our own folly and rank wickedness,
Which gave them birth and nursed them. Others,
meanwhile,
Dote with a mad idolatry ; and all
Who will not fall before their images,
And yield them worship, they are enemies
Even of their country !

Such have I been deemed—

But, O dear Britain ! O my Mother Isle !
Needs must thou prove a name most dear and holy
To me, a son, a brother, and a friend,
A husband, and a father ! who revere
All bonds of natural love, and find them all
Within the limits of thy rocky shores.
O native Britain ! O my Mother Isle !
How shouldst thou prove aught else but dear and
holy
To me, who from thy lakes and mountain-hills,
Thy clouds, thy quiet dales, thy rocks and seas,
Have drunk in all my intellectual life,
All sweet sensations, all ennobling thoughts,

All adoration of the God in nature,
All lovely and all honourable things,
Whatever makes this mortal spirit feel
The joy and greatness of its future being ?
There lives nor form nor feeling in my soul
Unborrowed from my country. O divine
And beauteous island ! thou hast been my sole
And most magnificent temple, in the which
I walk with awe, and sing my stately songs,
Loving the God that made me !

May my fears,
My filial fears, be vain ! and may the vaunts
And menace of the vengeful enemy
Pass like the gust, that roared and died away
In the distant tree : which heard, and only heard
In this low dell, bowed not the delicate grass.

But now the gentle dew-fall sends abroad
The fruit-like perfume of the golden furze :
The light has left the summit of the hill,
Though still a sunny gleam lies beautiful,
Aslant the ivied beacon. Now farewell,
Farewell, awhile, O soft and silent spot !
On the green sheep-track, up the heathy hill,
Homeward I wind my way ; and lo ! recalled
From bodings that have well-nigh wearied me,
I find myself upon the brow, and pause
Startled ! And after lonely sojourning
In such a quiet and surrounded nook,
This burst of prospect, here the shadowy main,
Dim tinted, there the mighty majesty
Of that huge amphitheatre of rich
And elmy fields, seems like society—

Conversing with the mind, and giving it
A livelier impulse and a dance of thought !
And now, beloved Stowey ! I behold
Thy church-tower, and, methinks, the four huge
elms,
Clustering, which mark the mansion of my friend ;
And close behind them, hidden from my view,
Is my own lowly cottage, where my babe
And my babe's mother dwell in peace ! With light
And quickened footsteps thitherward I tend,
Remembering thee, O green and silent dell !
And grateful, that by nature's quietness
And solitary musings, all my heart
Is softened, and made worthy to indulge
Love, and the thoughts that yearn for human kind.

THE DESTINY OF NATIONS.

A VISION.

AUSPICIOUS Reverence ! Hush all meaner song,
Ere we the deep preluding strain have poured
To the Great Father, only Rightful King,
Eternal Father ! King Omnipotent !
To the Will Absolute, the One, the Good !
The I AM, the Word, the Life, the Living God !

Such symphony requires best instrument.
Seize, then, my soul ! from Freedom's trophied dome

The harp which hangeth high between the shields
Of Brutus and Leonidas ! With that
Strong music, that soliciting spell, force back
Man's free and stirring spirit that lies entranced.

For what is freedom, but the unfettered use
Of all the powers which God for use had given ?
But chiefly this, him first, him last to view
Through meaner powers and secondary things
Effulgent, as through clouds that veil his blaze.
For all that meets the bodily sense I deem
Symbolical, one mighty alphabet
For infant minds ; and we in this low world
Placed with our backs to bright reality,
That we may learn with young unwounded ken
The substance from its shadow. Infinite Love,
Whose latence is the plenitude of all,
Thou with retracted beams, and self-eclipse
Veiling, revealest thine eternal Sun.

But some there are who deem themselves most free
When they within this gross and visible sphere
Chain down the winged thought, scoffing ascent,
Proud in their meanness : and themselves they cheat
With noisy emptiness of learned phrase,
Their subtle fluids, impacts, essences,
Self-working tools, uncaused effects, and all
Those blind omniscients, those almighty slaves,
Untenanted creation of its God.

But properties are God : the naked mass
(If mass there be, fantastic guess or ghost)
Acts only by its inactivity.
Here we pause humbly. Others boldier think

That as one body seems the aggregate
Of atoms numberless, each organised ;
So by a strange and dim similitude
Infinite myraids of self-conscious minds
Are one all-conscious Spirit, which informs
With absolute ubiquity of thought
(His one eternal self-affirming act !)
All his involved Monads, that yet seem
With various province and apt agency
Each to pursue his own self-centring end ;
Some nurse the infant diamond in the mine ;
Some roll the genial juices through the oak ;
Some drive the mutinous clouds to clash in air,
And rushing on the storm with whirlwind speed,
Yoke the red lightnings to their volleying car.
Thus these pursue their never-varying course,
No eddy in their stream. Others more wild,
With complex interests weaving human fates,
Duteous or proud, alike obedient all,
Evolve the process of eternal good.

And what if some rebellious o'er dark realms
Arrogate power ? yet these train up to God,
And on the rude eye, unconfirmed for day,
Flash meteor-lights better than total gloom.
As ere from Lieule-Oaive's vapoury head
The Laplander beholds the far-off sun
Dart his slant beam on unobeying snows,
While yet the stern and solitary night
Brooks no alternate sway, the Boreal Morn
With mimic lustre substitutes its gleam,
Guiding his course or by Niemi lake
Or Balda Zhiok, or the mossy stone
Of Solfar-kapper, while the snowy blast

Drifts arrowy by, or eddies round his sledge,
Making the poor babe at its mother's back
Scream in its scanty cradle : he the while
Wins gentle solace as with upward eye
He marks the streamy banners of the North,
Thinking himself those happy spirits shall join
Who there in floating robes of rosy light
Dance sportively. For Fancy is the power
That first unsensualises the dark mind,
Giving it new delights ; and bids it swell
With wild activity ; and peopling air,
By obscure fears of beings invisible,
Emancipates it from the grosser thrall
Of the present impulse, teaching self-control,
Till Superstition with unconscious hand
Seat Reason on her throne. Wherefore not vain,
Nor yet without permitted power impressed,
I deem those legends terrible, with which
The polar ancient thrills his uncouth throng ;
Whether of pitying Spirits that make their moan
O'er slaughtered infants, or that giant bird
Vuokho, of whose rushing wings the noise
Is tempest, when the unutterable shape
Speeds from the mother of Death, and utters once
That shriek, which never murderer heard, and lived.

Or if the Greenland Wizard in strange trance
Pierces the untravelled realms of Ocean's bed
Over the abysm, even to that uttermost cave
By mis-shaped prodigies beleaguered, such
As earth ne'er bred, nor air, nor the upper sea :
Where dwells the Fury Form, whose unheard name
With eager eye, pale cheek, suspended breath,

And lips half-opening with the dread of sound,
Unsleeping Silence guards, worn out with fear
Lest haply 'scaping on some treacherous blast
The fateful word let slip the elements
And frenzy Nature. Yet the wizard her,
Armed with Torngarsuck's power, the Spirit of Good,
Forces to unchain the foodful progeny
Of the Ocean stream—thence thro' the realm of
Souls,

Where live the Innocent, as far from cares
As from the storms and overwhelming waves
That tumble on the surface of the Deep,
Returns with far-heard pant, hotly pursued
By the fierce Warders of the Sea, once more,
Ere by the frost foreclosed, to repossess
His fleshly mansion, that had staid the while
In the dark tent within a cowering group
Untenanted. Wild phantasies! yet wise,
On the victorious goodness of high God
Teaching reliance, and medicinal hope,
Till from Bethabrah northward, heavenly Truth
With gradual steps, winning her difficult way,
Transfer their rude Faith perfected and pure.

If there be beings of higher class than Man,
I deem no nobler province they possess,
Than by disposal of apt circumstance
To rear up kingdoms: and the deeds they prompt
Distinguishing from mortal agency,
They choose their human ministers from such states
As still the Epic song half fears to name,
Repelled from all the minstrelsies that strike
The palace-roof and soothe the monarch's pride.

And such, perhaps, the Spirit, who (if words
Witnessed by answering deeds may claim our faith)
Held commune with that warrior-maid of France
Who scourged the Invader. From her infant days,
With Wisdom, mother of retired thoughts,
Her soul had dwelt ; and she was quick to mark
The good and evil thing, in human lore
Undisciplined. For lowly was her birth,
And Heaven had doomed her early years to toil,
That pure from tyranny's least deed, herself
Unfeared by fellow-natures, she might wait
On the poor labouring man with kindly looks,
And minister refreshment to the tired
Way-wanderer, when along the rough hewn bench
The sweltry man had stretched him, and aloft
Vacantly watched the rudely pictured board
Which on the mulberry-bough with welcome creak
Swung to the pleasant breeze. Here, too, the Maid
Learnt more than schools could teach : Man's shifting
mind,

His vices and his sorrows ! And full oft
At tales of cruel wrong and strange distress
Had wept and shivered. To the tottering eld
Still as a daughter would she run : she placed
His cold limbs at the sunny door, and loved
To hear him story, in his garrulous sort,
Of his eventful years, all come and gone.

So twenty seasons past. The Virgin's form
Active and tall, nor sloth nor luxury
Had shrunk or paled. Her front sublime and broad,
Her flexile eyebrows wildly haired and low,
And her full eye, now bright, now unillumed,
Spake more than Woman's thought ; and all her face

Was moulded to such features as declared
That pity there had oft and strongly worked,
And sometimes indignation. Bold her mien,
And like a haughty huntress of the woods
She moved : yet sure she was a gentle maid,
And in each motion her most innocent soul
Beamed forth so brightly, that who saw would say
Guilt was a thing impossible in her !
Nor idly would have said—for she had lived
In this bad World as in a place of tombs,
And touched not the pollutions of the dead.

'Twas the cold season when the rustic's eye
From the drear desolate whiteness of his fields
Rolls for relief to watch the skiey tints
And clouds slow varying their huge imagery ;
When now, as she was wont, the healthful Maid
Had left her pallet ere one beam of day
Slanted the fog-smoke. She went forth alone,
Urged by the indwelling angel-guide, that oft,
With dim inexplicable sympathies
Disquieting the heart, shapes out Man's course
To the predoomed adventure. Now the ascent
She climbs of that steep upland, on whose top
The Pilgrim-man, who long since eve had watched
The alien shine of unconcerning stars,
Shouts to himself, there first the Abbey-lights
Seen in Neufchatel's vale ; now slopes adown
The winding sheep-track vale-ward : when, behold
In the first entrance of the level road
An unattended team ! The foremost horse
Lay with stretched limbs ; the others, yet alive
But stiff and cold, stood motionless, their manes
Hoar with the frozen night dews. Dismally

The dark-red dawn now glimmered ; but its gleams
Disclosed no face of man. The maiden paused,
Then hailed who might be near. No voice replied.
From the thwart wain at length there reached her ear
A sound so feeble that it almost seemed
Distant : and feebly, with slow effort pushed,
A miserable man crept forth : his limbs
The silent frost had eat, scathing like fire.
Faint on the shafts he rested. She, meantime,
Saw crowded close beneath the coverture
A mother and her children—lifeless all,
Yet lovely ! not a lineament was marred—
Death had put on so slumber-like a form !
It was a piteous sight ; and one, a babe,
The crisp milk frozen on its innocent lips,
Lay on the woman's arm, its little hand
Stretched on her bosom.

Mutely questioning,

The Maid gazed wildly at the living wretch.
He, his head feebly turning, on the group
Looked with a vacant stare, and his eyes spoke
The drowsy calm that steals on worn-out anguish.
She shuddered ; but, each vainer pang subdued,
Quick disentangling from the foremost horse
The rustic bands, with difficulty and toil [arrived,
The stiff cramped team forced homeward. There
Anxiously tends him she with healing herbs,
And weeps and prays—but the numb power of Death
Spreads o'er his limbs ; and ere the noontide hour,
The hovering spirits of his wife and babes
Hail him immortal ! Yet amid his pangs,
With interruptions long from ghastly throes,
His voice had faltered out this simple tale.

The village, where he dwelt a husbandman,
By sudden inroad had been seized and fired
Late on the yester-evening. With his wife
And little ones he hurried his escape.
They saw the neighbouring hamlets flame, they heard
Uproar and shrieks ! and terror-struck drove on
Through unfrequented roads, a weary way !
But saw nor house nor cottage. All had quenched
Their evening hearth-fire : for the alarm had spread.
The air clipped keen, the night was fanged with frost,
And they provisionless ! The weeping wife
Ill hushed her children's moans ; and still they moaned,
Till fright, and cold, and hunger drank their life.
They closed their eyes in sleep, nor knew 'twas death.
He only, lashing his o'er-wearied team,
Gained a sad respite, till beside the base
Of the high hill his foremost horse dropped dead.
Then hopeless, strengthless, sick for lack of food,
He crept beneath the coverture, entranced,
Till wakened by the Maiden.—Such his tale.

Ah ! suffering to the height of what was suffered,
Stung with too keen a sympathy, the Maid
Brooded with moving lips, mute, startful, dark !
And now her flushed tumultuous features shot
Such strange vivacity, as fires the eye
Of misery fancy-crazed ! and now once more
Naked, and void, and fixed, and all within
The unquiet silence of confused thought
And shapeless feelings. For a mighty hand
Was strong upon her, till in the heat of soul
To the high hill-top tracing back her steps,
Aside the beacon, up whose smouldered stones
The tender ivy-trails crept thinly, there,

Unconscious of the driving element,
Yea, swallowed up in the ominous dream, she sate
Ghastly as broad-eyed Slumber ! a dim anguish
Breathed from her look ! and still with pant and sob,
Inly she toil'd to flee, and still subdued,
Felt an Inevitable Presence near.

Thus as she toiled in troublous ecstasy,
A horror of great darkness wrapt her round,
And a voice uttered forth unearthly tones,
Calming her soul—" O Thou of the Most High
Chosen, whom all the perfected in Heaven
Behold expectant—

[The following fragments were intended to form part of the poem when finished.]

“ Maid beloved of Heaven !
(To her the tutelary Power exclaimed)
Of Chaos the adventurous progeny
Thou seest ; foul missionaries of foul sire,
Fierce to regain the losses of that hour
When Love rose glittering, and his gorgeous wings
Over the abyss fluttered with such glad noise,
As what time after long and pestful calms,
With slimy shapes and miscreated life
Poisoning the vast Pacific, the fresh breeze
Wakens the merchant-sail uprising. Night
A heavy unimaginable moan
Sent forth, when she the Protoplast beheld
Stand beauteous on confusion's charmed wave.
Moaning she fled, and entered the Profound
That leads with downward windings to the cave
Of darkness palpable, desert of Death
Sunk deep beneath Gehenna's massy roots.

There many a dateless age the beldam lurked
And trembled ; till engendered by fierce Hate,
Fierce Hate and gloomy Hope, a Dream arose,
Shaped like a black cloud marked with streaks of fire.
It roused the Hell-Hag : she the dew damp wiped
From off her brow, and through the uncouth maze
Retraced her steps ; but ere she reached the mouth
Of that drear labyrinth, shuddering she paused,
Nor dared re-enter the diminished Gulf.
As through the dark vaults of some mouldered tower
(Which, fearful to approach, the evening hind
Circles at distance in his homeward way)
The winds breathe hollow, deemed the plaining groan
Of prisoned spirits ; with such fearful voice
Night murmured, and the sound thro' Chaos went.
Leaped at her call her hideous-fronted brood !
A dark behest they heard, and rushed on earth ;
Since that sad hour, in camps and courts adored,
Rebels from God, and tyrants o'er Mankind ! ”

From his obscure haunt
Shrieked Fear, of Cruelty the ghastly dam,
Feverous yet freezing, eager-paced yet slow,
As she that creeps from forth her swampy reeds,
Ague, the biform hag ! when early Spring
Beams on the marsh-bred vapours.

“ Even so (the exulting Maiden said)
The sainted heralds of good tidings fell,
And thus they witnessed God ! But now the clouds
Treading, and storms beneath their feet, they soar
Higher, and higher soar, and soaring sing
Loud songs of triumph ! O ye spirits of God,
Hover around my mortal agonies ! ”

She spake, and instantly faint melody
Melts on her ear, soothing, and sad, and slow,
Such measures, as at calmest midnight heard
By aged hermit in his holy dream,
Foretell and solace death ; and now they rise
Louder, as when with harp and mingled voice
The white-robed multitude of slaughtered saints
At Heaven's wide-opened portals grātulant
Receive some martyr'd patriot. The harmony
Entranced the Maid, till each suspended sense
Brief slumber seized, and confused ecstasy.

At length awakening slow, she gazed around :
And through a mist, the relique of that trance
Still thinning as she gazed, an Isle appeared,
Its high, o'er-hanging, white, broad-breasted cliffs,
Glassed on the subject ocean. A vast plain
Stretched opposite, where ever and anon
The ploughman following sad his meagre team
Turned up fresh skulls unstartled, and the bones
Of fierce hate-breathing combatants, who there
All mingled lay beneath the common earth,
Death's gloomy reconciliation ! O'er the fields
Stept a fair Form, repairing all she might,
Her temples olive-wreathed ; and where she trod,
Fresh flowerets rose, and many a foodful herb.
But wan her cheek, her footsteps insecure,
And anxious pleasure beamed in her faint eye,
As she had newly left a couch of pain,
Pale convalescent ! (yet some time to rule
With power exclusive o'er the willing world,
That blest prophetic mandate then fulfilled—
Peace be on Earth !) A happy while, but brief,
She seemed to wander with assiduous feet,

And healed the recent harm of chill and blight,
And nursed each plant that fair and virtuous grew.

But soon a deep precursive sound moaned hollow :
Black rose the clouds, and now (as in a dream)
Their reddening shapes, transformed to warrior-hosts,
Coursed o'er the sky, and battled in mid-air.
Nor did not the large blood-drops fall from heaven
Portentous ! while aloft were seen to float,
Like hideous features booming on the mist,
Wan stains of ominous light ! Resigned, yet sad,
The fair Form bowed her olive-crowned brow,
Then o'er the plain with oft reverted eye
Fled till a place of tombs she reached, and there
Within a ruined sepulchre obscure
Found hiding-place.

The delegated Maid
Gazed through her tears, then in sad tones exclaimed—
“Thou mild-eyed Form ! wherefore, ah ! wherefore
fled ?

The power of Justice like a name all light,
Shone from thy brow ; but all they, who unblamed
Dwelt in thy dwellings, call thee Happiness.
Ah ! why, uninjured and unprofited,
Should multitudes against their brethren rush ?
Why sow they guilt, still reaping misery ?
Lenient of care, thy songs, O Peace ! are sweet,
As after showers the perfumed gale of eve,
That flings the cool drops on a feverish cheek ;
And gay thy grassy altar piled with fruits.
But boasts the shrine of demon War one charm,
Save that with many an orgie strange and foul,
Dancing around with interwoven arms,

The maniac Suicide and giant Murder
Exult in their fierce union ! I am sad,
And know not why the simple peasants crowd
Beneath the Chieftains' standard ! " Thus the Maid.

To her the tutelary Spirit said :
" When luxury and lust's exhausted stores
No more can rouse the appetites of kings ;
When the low flattery of their reptile lords
Falls flat and heavy on the accustomed ear ;
When eunuchs sing, and fools buffoonery make,
And dancers writhe their harlot-limbs in vain ;
Then War and all its dread vicissitudes
Pleasingly agitate their stagnant hearts ;
Its hopes, its fears, its victories, its defeats,
Insipid royalty's keen condiment !
Therefore uninjured and unprofited
(Victims at once and executioners),
The congregated husbandmen lay waste
The vineyard and the harvest. As along
The Bothnic coast, or southward of the Line,
Though hushed the winds and cloudless the high
noon,
Yet if Leviathan, weary of ease,
In sports unwieldy toss his island-bulk,
Ocean behind him billows, and before
A storm of waves breaks foamy on the strand.
And hence, for times and seasons bloody and dark,
Short Peace shall skin the wounds of causeless War,
And War, his strained sinews knit anew,
Still violate the unfinished works of Peace.
But yonder look ! for more demands thy view !"
He said : and straightway from the opposite Isle
A vapour sailed, as when a cloud, exhaled

From Egypt's fields that steam hot pestilence,
Travels the sky for many a trackless league,
Till o'er some death-doomed land, distant in vain,
It broods incumbent. Forthwith from the plain,
Facing the Isle, a brighter cloud arose,
And steered its course which way the vapour went.

The Maiden paused, musing what this might mean.
But long time passed not, ere that brighter cloud
Returned more bright ; along the plain it swept ;
And soon from forth its bursting sides emerged
A dazzling form, broad-bosomed, bold of eye,
And wild her hair, save where with laurels bound.
Not more majestic stood the healing God,
When from his bow the arrow sped that slew
Huge Python. Shriek'd Ambition's giant throng.
And with them hissed the locust-fiends that crawled
And glittered in Corruption's slimy track.
Great was their wrath, for short they knew their
reign ;

And such commotion made they, and uproar,
As when the mad tornado bellows through
The guilty islands of the western main,
What time departing from their native shores,
Eboe, or Koromantyn's plain of palms,
The infuriate spirits of the murdered make
Fierce merriment, and vengeance ask of Heaven.
Warmed with new influence, the unwholesome plain
Sent up its foulest fogs to meet the morn :
The sun that rose on Freedom, rose in blood !

“ Maiden beloved, and Delegate of Heaven !
(To her the tutelary Spirit said)
Soon shall the morning struggle into day,

The stormy morning into cloudless noon.
Much hast thou seen, nor all canst understand—
But this be thy best omen—Save thy Country !”
Thus saying, from the answering Maid he passed,
And with him disappeared the heavenly Vision.

“ Glory to Thee, Father of Earth and Heaven !
All conscious presence of the Universe !
Nature’s vast ever-acting energy !
In will, in deed, impulse of All to All !
Whether thy Love with unrefracted ray
Beam on the Prophet’s purged eye, or if
Diseasing realms the enthusiast, wild of thought,
Scatter new frenzies on the infected throng,
Thou both inspiring and predooming both,
Fit instruments and best, of perfect end :
Glory to Thee, Father of Earth and Heaven !”

And first a landscape rose
More wild and waste and desolate than where
The white bear, drifting on a field of ice,
Howls to her sundered cubs with piteous rage
And savage agony.



HYMN TO THE EARTH.

HEXAMETERS.

EARTH! thou mother of numberless children, the
nurse and the mother,
Hail! O Goddess, thrice hail! Blest be thou! and,
blessing, I hymn thee!
Forth, ye sweet sounds! from my harp, and my voice
shall float on your surges—
Soar thou aloft, O my soul! and bear up my song on
thy pinions.

Travelling the vale with mine eyes—green meadows and
lake with green island,
Dark in its basin of rock, and the bare stream flowing in
brightness,
Thrilled with thy beauty and love in the wooded slope
of the mountain,
Here, great mother, I lie, thy child, with his head on
thy bosom!
Playful the spirits of noon, that rushing soft through
thy tresses,
Green-haired goddess! refresh me; and hark! as they
hurry or linger,
Fill the pause of my harp, or sustain it with musical
murmurs.
Into my being thou murmurest joy, and tenderest
sadness
Shedd'st thou, like dew, on my heart, till the joy and
the heavenly sadness

Pour themselves forth from my heart in tears, and the
hymn of thanksgiving.

Earth ! thou mother of numberless children, the nurse
and the mother,

Sister thou of the stars, and beloved by the sun, the
rejoicer !

Guardian and friend of the moon, O Earth, whom the
comets forget not,

Yea, in the measureless distance wheel round and again
they behold thee !

Fadeless and young (and what if the latest birth of
creation ?)

Bride and consort of Heaven, that looks down upon thee
enamoured !

Say, mysterious Earth ! O say, great mother and
goddess,

Was it not well with thee then, when first thy lap was
ungirdled,

Thy lap to the genial Heaven, the day that he wooed
thee and won thee !

Fair was thy blush, the fairest and first of the blushes of
morning !

Deep was the shudder, O Earth ! the throe of thy self-
retention :

Inly thou strovest to flee, and didst seek thyself at thy
centre !

Mightier far was the joy of thy sudden resilience ; and
forthwith

Myriad myriads of lives teemed forth from the mighty
embrace.

Thousand-fold tribes of dwellers, impelled by thousand-
fold instincts,

Filled, as a dream, the wide waters ; the rivers sang on
their channels ;

Laughed on their shores the hoarse seas ; the yearning
ocean swelled upward ;
Young life lowed through the meadows, the woods, and
the echoing mountains,
Wandered bleating in valleys, and warbled on blossoming
branches.

TRANSLATION OF A PASSAGE IN OTTFRIED'S
METRICAL PARAPHRASE OF THE GOSPELS.

SHE gave with joy her virgin breast,
She hid it not, she bared the breast,
Which suckled that divinest babe !
Blessed, blessed were the breasts
Which the infant Saviour kiss'd ;
And blessed, blessed was the mother
Who rapp'd his limbs in swaddling clothes,
Singing placed him in her lap,
Hung o'er him with her looks of love,
And soothed him with a lulling motion :
Blessed ! for she shelter'd him
From the damp and chilling air—
Blessed, blessed ! for she lay
With such a babe in one blest bed,
Close as babes and mothers lie !
Blessed, blessed evermore,
With her virgin lips she kiss'd,
With her arms, and to her breast,
She embraced the babe divine,
Her babe divine the virgin mother !
There lives not on this ring of earth

A mortal that can sing her praise,
Mighty mother, virgin pure,
In the darkness and the night
For us she bore the heavenly Lord.

[It has been urged that "Remorse," though it, like the rest of Coleridge's Plays, has little dramatic interest, is yet a fine psychological study, and on that account, contrary to our original intention, is here inserted.—ED.]

REMORSE.

A TRAGEDY. IN FIVE ACTS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MARQUIS VALDEZ, *father to the two brothers, and
Dona Teresa's guardian.*
DON ALVAR, *the eldest son,*
DON ORDONIO, *the youngest son.*
MONVIEDRO, *a Dominican and Inquisitor.*
ZULIMEZ, *the faithful attendant on Alvar.*
ISIDORE, *a Moresco chieftain, ostensibly a Christian.*
Familiars of the Inquisition.
NAOMI.
Moors, Servants, etc.
DONA TERESA, *an orphan heiress.*
ALHADRA, *wife of Isidore.*

TIME—The Reign of Philip II., just at the close of the civil wars against the Moors, and during the heat of the

persecution which raged against them, shortly after the edict which forbade the wearing of Moresco apparel under pain of death.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Sea-shore on the Coast of Granada.*—

DON ALVAR, *wrapt in a boat cloak, and* ZULIMEZ (*a Moresco*), *both as just landed.*

Zul. No sound, no face of joy to welcome us !

Alv. My faithful Zulimez, for one brief moment
Let me forget my anguish and their crimes,
If aught on earth demand an unmixed feeling,
'Tis surely this—after long years of exile,
To step forth on firm land, and gazing round us,
To hail at once our country, and our birth-place.
Hail, Spain ! Granada, hail ! once more I press
Thy sands with filial awe, land of my fathers !

Zul. Then claim your rights in it ! O, revered

Don Alvar,

Yet, yet give up your all too gentle purpose.
It is too hazardous ! reveal yourself,
And let the guilty meet the doom of guilt !

Alv. Remember, Zulimez ! I am his brother,
Injured indeed ! O deeply injured ! yet
Ordonio's brother.

Zul. Nobly minded Alvar !

This sure but gives his guilt a blacker dye.

Alv. The more behoves it, I should rouse within him
Remorse ! that I should save him from himself.

Zul. Remorse is as the heart in which it grows :
If that be gentle, it drops balmy dews
Of true repentance ; but if proud and gloomy,
It is a poison-tree, that pierced to the inmost
Weeps only tears of poison.

Alv. And of a brother,
Dare I hold this, unproved ? nor make one effort
To save him ?—Hear me, friend ! I have yet to tell
thee,

That this same life, which he conspired to take,
Himself once rescued from the angry flood,
And at the imminent hazard of his own.
Add too my oath——

Zul. You have thrice told already
The years of absence and of secrecy,
To which a forced oath bound you : if in truth
A suborned murderer have the power to dictate
A binding oath——

Alv. My long captivity
Left me no choice : the very wish too languished
With the fond hope that nursed it ; the sick babe
Drooped at the bosom of its famished mother.
But (more than all) Teresa's perfidy ;
The assassin's strong assurance, when no interest,
No motive could have tempted him to falsehood :
In the first pangs of his awakened conscience,
When with abhorrence of his own black purpose
The murderous weapon, pointed at my breast,
Fell from his palsied hand——

Zul. Heavy presumption !

Alv. It weighed not with me—Hark ! I will tell thee
all ;

As we passed by, I bade thee mark the base
Of yonder cliff——

Zul. That rocky seat you mean,
Shaped by the billows ?——

Alv. There Teresa met me
The morning of the day of my departure.
We were alone : the purple hue of dawn

Fell from the kindling east aslant upon us,
 And blending with blushes on her cheek,
 Suffused the tear-drops there with rosy light.
 There seemed a glory round us, and Teresa
 The angel of the vision ! *[Then with agitation.*

Had'st thou seen
 How in each motion her most innocent soul
 Beamed forth and brightened, thou thyself would'st tell
 me,
 Guilt is a thing impossible in her !
 She must be innocent !

Zul. [with a sigh.] Proceed, my lord !

Alv. A portrait which she had procured by stealth
 (For even then it seems her heart foreboded
 Or knew Ordonio's moody rivalry),
 A portrait of herself with thrilling hand
 She tied around my neck, conjuring me,
 With earnest prayers, that I would keep it sacred
 To my own knowledge : nor did she desist,
 Till she had won a solemn promise from me,
 That (save my own) no eye should e'er behold it
 Till my return. Yet this the assassin knew,
 Knew that which none but she could have disclosed.

Zul. A damning proof !

Alv. My own life wearied me !
 And but for the imperative voice within,
 With mine own hand I had thrown off the burthen.
 That voice, which quelled me, calmed me : and I sought
 The Belgic states : there joined the better cause ;
 And there too fought as one that courted death !
 Wounded, I fell among the dead and dying,
 In death-like trance : a long imprisonment followed.
 The fulness of my anguish by degrees
 Waned to a meditative melancholy ;

And still the more I mused, my soul became
More doubtful, more perplexed ; and still Teresa,
Night after night, she visited my sleep ;
Now as a saintly sufferer, wan and tearful,
Now as a saint in glory beckoning to me !
Yes, still as in contempt of proof and reason,
I cherish the fond faith that she is guiltless !
Hear then my fixed resolve : I'll linger here
In the disguise of a Moresco chieftain.—
The Moorish robes ?——

Zul. All, all are in the sea-cave,
Some furlong hence. I bade our mariners
Secrete the boat there.

Alv. Above all, the picture
Of the assassination——

Zul. Be assured
That it remains uninjured.

Alv. Thus disguised
I will first seek to meet Ordonio's—wife !
If possible, alone too. This was her wonted walk,
And this the hour ; her words, her very looks
Will acquit her or convict.

Zul. Will they not know you ?

Alv. With your aid, friend, I shall unfearingly
Trust the disguise ; and as to my complexion,
My long imprisonment, the scanty food,
This scar—and toil beneath a burning sun,
Have done already half the business for us.
Add too my youth—since last we saw each other,
Manhood hath swoln my chest, and taught my voice
A hoarser note.—Besides, they think me dead ;
And what the mind believes impossible,
The bodily sense is slow to recognise.

Zul. 'Tis yours, sir, to command, mine to obey.

Now to the cave beneath the vaulted rock,
Where having shaped you to a Moorish chieftain,
I'll seek our mariners; and in the dusk
Transport whate'er we need to the small dell
In the Alpujarras—there where Zagri lived.

Alv. I know it well : it is the obscurest haunt
Of all the mountains—— [Both stand listening.
Voices at a distance !

Let us away ! [Exeunt.

SCENE II.—*The Sea-shore, but within view of the Castle.*

Enter TERESA and VALDEZ.

Ter. I hold Ordonio dear ; he is your son
And Alvar's brother.

Val. Love him for himself,
Nor make the living wretched for the dead.

Ter. I mourn that you should plead in vain, Lord
Valdez ;

But Heaven hath heard my vow, and I remain
Faithful to Alvar, be he dead or living.

Val. Heaven knows with what delight I saw your loves,
And could my heart's blood give him back to thee
I would die smiling. But these are idle thoughts !
Thy dying father comes upon my soul
With that same look, with which he gave thee to me ;
I held thee in my arms a powerless babe,
While thy poor mother, with a mute entreaty,
Fixed her faint eyes on mine. Ah ! not for this,
That I should let thee feed thy soul with gloom,
And with slow anguish wear away thy life,
The victim of a useless constancy.
I must not see thee wretched.

Ter.

There are woes

Ill bartered for the garishness of joy !
If it be wretched with an untired eye
To watch those skiey tints, and this green ocean ;
Or in the sultry hour beneath some rock,
My hair dishevelled by the pleasant sea breeze,
To shape sweet visions, and live o'er again
All past hours of delight ! If it be wretched
To watch some bark, and fancy Alvar there,
To go through each minutest circumstance
Of the blest meeting, and to frame adventures
Most terrible and strange, and hear him tell them ;
(As once I knew a crazy Moorish maid
Who dressed her in her buried lover's clothes,
And o'er the smooth spring in the mountain cleft
Hung with her lute, and played the selfsame tune
He used to play, and listened to the shadow
Herself had made)—if this be wretchedness,
And if indeed it be a wretched thing
To trick out mine own death-bed, and imagine
That I had died, died just ere his return !
Then see him listening to my constancy,
Or hover round, as he at midnight oft
Sits on my grave, and gazes at the moon ;
Or haply in some more fantastic mood,
To be in Paradise, and with choice flowers
Build up a bower where he and I might dwell,
And there to wait his coming ! O my sire !
My Alvar's sire ! if this be wretchedness
That eats away the life, what were it, think you,
If in a most assured reality
He should return, and see a brother's infant
Smile at him from my arms ?
Oh what a thought !

[Clasping her forehead.]

Val. A thought? even so! mere thought! an empty thought.

The very week he promised his return——

Ter. [*abruptly.*] Was it not then a busy joy? to see him,

After those three years' travels! we had no fears—
The frequent tidings, the ne'er failing letter,
Almost endeared his absence! Yet the gladness,
The tumult of our joy! What then if now——

Val. O power of youth to feed on pleasant thoughts,
Spite of conviction! I am old and heartless!
Yes, I am old—I have no pleasant fancies—
Hectic and unrefreshed with rest——

Ter. [*with great tenderness.*] My father!

Val. The sober truth is all too much for me!

I see no sail which brings not to my mind
The home-bound bark in which my son was captured
By the Algerine—to perish with his captors!

Ter. Oh no! he did not!

Val. Captured in sight of land!

From yon hill point, nay, from our castle watch-tower
We might have seen——

Ter. His capture, not his death.

Val. Alas! how aptly thou forget'st a tale
Thou ne'er didst wish to learn! my brave Ordonio
Saw both the pirate and his prize go down,
In the same storm that baffled his own valour,
And thus twice snatched a brother from his hopes:
Gallant Ordonio! [*pauses, then tenderly.*] O beloved

Teresa,

Wouldst thou best prove thy faith to generous Alvar,
And most delight his spirit, go, make thou
His brother happy, make his aged father
Sink to the grave in joy.

Ter. For mercy's sake
Press me no more ! I have no power to love him.
His proud forbidding eye, and his dark brow,
Chill me like dew damps of the unwholesome night :
My love, a timorous and tender flower,
Closes beneath his touch.

Val. You wrong him, maiden !
You wrong him, by my soul ! Nor was it well
To character by such unkindly phrases
The stir and workings of that love for you
Which he has toiled to smother. 'Twas not well,
Nor is it grateful in you to forget
His wounds and perilous voyages, and how
With a heroic fearlessness of danger
He roamed the coast of Afric for your Alvar.
It was not well—You have moved me even to tears.

Ter. O pardon me, Lord Valdez ! pardon me !
It was a foolish and ungrateful speech,
A most ungrateful speech ! But I am hurried
Beyond myself, if I but hear of one
Who aims to rival Alvar. Were we not
Born in one day, like twins of the same parent ?
Nursed in one cradle ? Pardon me, my father !
A six years' absence is a heavy thing,
Yet still the hope survives——

Val. [*looking forward.*] Hush ! 'tis Monviedro.

Ter. The inquisitor ! on what new scent of blood ?

Enter MONVIEDRO with ALHADRA.

Mon. [*having first made his obeisance to VALDEZ and TERESA.*] Peace and the truth be with you !

Good my Lord,
My present need is with your son.

[*Looking forward.*] We have hit the time. Here comes he ! Yes, 'tis he.

Enter from the opposite side DON ORDONIO.

My Lord Ordonio, this Moresco woman
(Alhadra is her name) asks audience of you.

Ord. Hail, reverend father ! what may be the business ?

Mon. My lord, on strong suspicion of relapse
To his false creed, so recently abjured,
The secret servants of the Inquisition
Have seized her husband, and at my command
To the supreme tribunal would have led him,
But that he made appeal to you, my lord,
As surety for his soundness in the faith.
Though lessened by experience what small trust
The asseverations of these Moors deserve,
Yet still the deference to Ordonio's name,
Nor less the wish to prove with what high honour
The Holy Church regards her faithful soldiers,
Thus far prevailed with me that——

Ord. Reverend father

I am much beholden to your high opinion,
Which so o'erprizes my light services.

[*Then to ALHADRA.*] I would that I could serve you :
but in truth

Your face is new to me.

Mon. My mind foretold me,
That such would be the event. In truth, Lord Valdez,
'Twas little probable that Don Ordonio,
That your illustrious son, who fought so bravely
Some four years since to quell these rebel Moors,
Should prove the patron of this infidel !
The warrantor of a Moresco's faith !
Now I return.

Alh. My lord, my husband's name
Is Isidore. [*ORDONIO starts.*—You may remember
it :

Three years ago, three years this very week,
You left him at Almeria.

Mon. Palpably false !
This very week, three years ago, my lord
(You needs but recollect it by your wound),
You were at sea, and there engaged the pirates,
The murderers doubtless of your brother Alvar !—

[*TERESA looks at MONVIEDRO with disgust and
horror. ORDONIO'S appearance to be col-
lected from what follows.*

[*To VALDEZ and pointing at ORDONIO.*] What, is he ill,
my lord ? how strange he looks !

Val. [*angrily.*] You pressed upon him too abruptly,
father,
The fate of one, on whom, you know, he doted.

Ord. [*starting as in sudden agitation.*] O heavens !
I ?—I doted ?— [*Then recovering himself.*
Yes ! I doted on him.

[*ORDONIO walks to the end of the stage ; VALDEZ
follows, soothing him.*

Ter. [*her eye following ORDONIO.*] I do not, can not,
love him. Is my heart hard ?
Is my heart hard ? that even now the thought
Should force itself upon me ?—Yet I feel it !

Mon. The drops did start and stand upon his forehead !
I will return. In very truth, I grieve,
To have been the occasion. Ho ! attend me, woman !

Alh. [*to TERESA.*] O gentle lady ! make the father stay
Until my lord recover. I am sure
That he will say he is my husband's friend.

Ter. Stay, father ! stay ! my lord will soon recover.

Ord. [*as they return to VALDEZ.*] Strange that this
Monviedro

Should have the power so to distemper me !

Val. Nay, 'twas an amiable weakness, son !

Mon. My lord, I truly grieve——

Ord. Tut ! name it not.

A sudden seizure, father ! think not of it.

As to this woman's husband, I do know him.

I know him well, and that he is a Christian.

Mon. I hope, my lord, your merely human pity
Doth not prevail——

Ord. 'Tis certain that he was a Catholic ;
What changes may have happened in three years,
I cannot say ; but grant me this, good father :
Myself I'll sift him : if I find him sound,
You'll grant me your authority and name
To liberate his house.

Mon. Your zeal, my lord,
And your late merits in this holy warfare,
Would authorise an ample trust—you have it.

Ord. I will attend you home within an hour.

Val. Meantime return with us, and take refreshment.

Alh. Not till my husband's free ! I may not do it.
I will stay here.

Ter. [*aside.*] Who is this Isidore ?

Val. Daughter !

Ter. With your permission, my dear lord,
I'll loiter yet awhile t' enjoy the sea breeze.

[*Exeunt VALDEZ, MONVIEDRO, and ORDONIO.*]

Alh. Hah ! there he goes ! a bitter curse go with him,
A scathing curse !

[*Then as if recollecting herself, and with a timid look.*]

You hate him, don't you, lady ?

Ter. [*perceiving that ALHADRA is conscious she has spoken imprudently.*] Oh, fear not me ! my heart is sad for you.

Alh. These fell inquisitors ! these sons of blood !
As I came on, his face so maddened me,
That ever and anon I clutched my dagger
And half unsheathed it——

Ter. Be more calm, I pray you.

Alh. And as he walked along the narrow path
Close by the mountain's edge, my soul grew eager ;
'Twas with hard toil I made myself remember
That his Familiars held my babes and husband.
To have leapt upon him with a tiger's plunge,
And hurled him down the rugged precipice,
O, it had been most sweet !

Ter. Hush ! hush, for shame !
Where is your woman's heart ?

Alh. O gentle lady !
You have no skill to guess my many wrongs,
Many and strange ! Besides, [*ironically*] I am a
Christian,
And Christians never pardon—'tis their faith !

Ter. Shame fall on those who so have shown it to thee !

Alh. I know that man ; 'tis well he knows not me.
Five years ago (and he was the prime agent),
Five years ago the holy brethren seized me.

Ter. What might your crime be ?

Alh. I was a Moresco !
They cast me, then a young and nursing mother,
Into a dungeon of their prison house ;
Where was no bed, no fire, no ray of light,
No touch, no sound of comfort ! The black air,
It was a toil to breathe it ! when the door,

Slow opening at the appointed hour, disclosed
One human countenance, the lamp's red flame
Cowered as it entered, and at once sank down.
Oh miserable ! by that lamp to see
My infant quarrelling with the coarse hard bread
Brought daily : for the little wretch was sickly—
My rage had dried away its natural food.
In darkness I remained—the dull bell counting,
Which haply told me, that the all-cheering sun
Was rising on our garden. When I dozed,
My infant's moanings mingled with my slumbers,
And waked me.—If you were a mother, lady,
I should scarce dare to tell you, that its noises
And peevish cries so fretted on my brain,
That I have struck the innocent babe in anger.

Ter. O Heaven ! it is too horrible to hear.

Alh. What was it then to suffer ? 'Tis most right
That such as you should hear it.—Know you not,
What nature makes you mourn, she bids you heal ?
Great evils ask great passions to redress them,
And whirlwinds fitliest scatter pestilence.

Ter. You were at length released ?

Alh. Yes, at length
I saw the blessed arch of the whole heaven !
'Twas the first time my infant smiled. No more—
For if I dwell upon that moment, lady,
A trance comes on which makes me o'er again
All I then was—my knees hang loose and drag,
And my lip falls with such an idiot laugh,
That you would start and shudder !

Ter. But your husband—

Alh. A month's imprisonment would kill him, lady.

Ter. Alas, poor man !

Alh. He hath a lion's courage,

Fearless in act, but feeble in endurance,
Unfit for boisterous times, with gentle heart
He worships nature in the hill and valley,
Not knowing what he loves, but loves it all——

Enter ALVAR disguised as a Moresco, and in Moorish Garments.

Ter. Know you that stately Moor?

Alh. I know him not:
But doubt not he is some Moresco chieftain,
Who hides himself among the Alpujarras.

Ter. The Alpujarras? Does he know his danger,
So near this seat?

Alh. He wears the Moorish robes too,
As in defiance of the royal edict.

[ALHADRA advances to ALVAR, who has walked to the back of the stage, near the rocks. TERESA drops her veil.]

Gallant Moresco! An inquisitor,
Montviedro, of known hatred to our race——

Alv. [interrupting her.] You have mistaken me. I
am a Christian.

Alh. He deems, that we are plotting to ensnare him:
Speak to him, lady—none can hear you speak,
And not believe you innocent of guile.

Ter. If aught enforce you to concealment, sir——

Alh. He trembles strangely.

[ALVAR sinks down, and hides his face in his robe.]

Ter. See, we have disturbed him.

[Approaches nearer to him.]

I pray you think us friends—uncowl your face,
For you seem faint, and the night breeze blows healing.
I pray you think us friends!

Alv. [*raising his head.*] Calm, very calm !
'Tis all too tranquil for reality !
And she spoke to me with her innocent voice,
That voice, that innocent voice ! She is no traitress !
Ter. [*haughtily to ALHADRA.*] Let us retire.

[*They advance to the front of the stage.*]

Alh. [*with scorn.*] He is indeed a Christian.
Alv. [*aside.*] She deems me dead, yet wears no
mourning garment !
Why should my brother's—wife—wear mourning garments ?

[*To TERESA.*] Your pardon, noble dame ! that I disturbed you :

I had just started from a frightful dream.

Ter. Dreams tell but of the past, and yet 'tis said,
They prophesy——

Alv. The Past lives o'er again
In its effects, and to the guilty spirit
The ever frowning Present is its image.

Ter. Traitor !
[*Then aside.*] What sudden spell o'ermasters me ?
Why seeks he me, shunning the Moorish woman ?

[*TERESA looks round uneasily, but gradually becomes attentive as ALVAR proceeds in the next speech.*]

Alv. I dreamed I had a friend, on whom I leaned
With blindest trust, and a betrothed maid,
Whom I was wont to call not mine, but me :
For mine own self seemed nothing, lacking her.
This maid so idolised, that trusted friend
Dishonoured in my absence, soul and body !
Fear, following guilt, tempted to blacker guilt,

And murderers were suborned against my life.
But by my looks, and most impassioned words,
I roused the virtues that are dead in no man,
Even in the assassins' hearts ! they made their terms,
And thanked me for redeeming them from murder.

Alh. You are lost in thought : hear him no more,
sweet lady !

Ter. From morn to night I am myself a dreamer,
And slight things bring on me the idle mood !
Well, sir, what happened then ?

Alv. On a rude rock,
A rock, methought, fast by a grove of firs,
Whose thready leaves to the low-breathing gale
Made a soft sound most like the distant ocean,
I staid, as though the hour of death were passed,
And I were sitting in the world of spirits—
For all things seemed unreal ! there I sate—
The dews fell clammy, and the night descended,
Black, sultry, close ! and ere the midnight hour
A storm came on, mingling all sounds of fear,
That woods, and sky, and mountains, seemed one
havock.

The second flash of lightning showed a tree
Hard by me, newly scathed. I rose tumultuous :
My soul worked high, I bared my head to the storm,
And with loud voice and clamorous agony,
Kneeling I prayed to the great Spirit that made me,
Prayed, that Remorse might fasten on their hearts,
And cling with poisonous tooth, inextricable
As the gored lion's bite !

Ter. [*shuddering.*] A fearful curse !

Alh. [*fiercely.*] But dreamed you not that you
returned and killed them ?
Dreamed you of no revenge ?

Alv. [his voice trembling, and in tones of deep distress.]

She would have died,
Died in her guilt—perchance by her own hands !
And bending o'er her self-inflicted wounds,
I might have met the evil glance of frenzy,
And leapt myself into an unblest grave !
I prayed for the punishment that cleanses hearts :
For still I loved her !

Alh. And you dreamed all this ?

Ter. My soul is full of visions all as wild !

Alh. There is no room in this heart for puling love tales.

Ter. [lifts up her veil, and advances to ALVAR.]

Stranger, farewell ! I guess not who you are,
Nor why you so addressed your tale to me.
Your mien is noble, and, I own, perplexed me
With obscure memory of something past,
Which still escaped my efforts, or presented
Tricks of a fancy pampered with long wishing.
If, as it sometimes happens, our rude startling,
Whilst your full heart was shaping out its dream,
Drove you to this, your not ungentle, wildness—
You have my sympathy, and so farewell !
But if some undiscovered wrongs oppress you,
And you need strength to drag them into light,
The generous Valdez, and my Lord Ordonio,
Have arm and will to aid a noble sufferer,
Nor shall you want my favourable pleading.

[Exeunt TERESA and ALHADRA.]

Alv. [alone.] 'Tis strange ! It cannot be ! my Lord Ordonio !

Her Lord Ordonio ! Nay, I will not do it !
I cursed him once—and one curse is enough !
How sad she looked, and pale ! but not like guilt—

And her calm tones—sweet as a song of mercy !
 If the bad spirit retained his angel's voice,
 Hell scarce were Hell. And why not innocent ?
 Who meant to murder me, might well cheat her ?
 But ere she married him, he had stained her honour ;
 Ah ! there I am hampered. What if this were a lie
 Framed by the assassin ? Who should tell it him.
 If it were truth ? Ordonio would not tell him.
 Yet why one lie ? all else, I know, was truth.
 No start, no jealousy of stirring conscience !
 And she referred to me—fondly, methought !
 Could she walk here if she had been a traitress ?
 Here, where we played together in our childhood ?
 Here, where we plighted vows ? where her cold cheek
 Received my last kiss, when with suppressed feelings
 She had fainted in my arms ? It cannot be !
 'Tis not in nature ! I will die believing,
 That I shall meet her where no evil is,
 No treachery, no cup dashed from the lips.
 I'll haunt this scene no more ! live she in peace !
 Her husband—aye her husband ! May this angel
 New mould his canker'd heart ! Assist me, Heaven,
 That I may pray for my poor guilty brother ! [Exit.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A wild and mountainous Country.*—ORDONIO
 and ISIDORE are discovered, supposed at a little dis-
 tance from ISIDORE'S house.

Ord. Here we may stop : your house distinct in view,
 Yet we secured from listeners.

Isid. Now indeed
 My house ! and it looks cheerful as the clusters
 Basking in sunshine on yon vine-clad rock,

That over-brows it ! Patron ! Friend ! Preserver !
Thrice have you saved my life. Once in the battle
You gave it me : next rescued me from suicide :
When for my follies I was made to wander,
With mouths to feed, and not a morsel for them :
Now but for you, a dungeon's slimy stones
Had been my bed and pillow.

Ord. Good Isidore !

Why this to me ! It is enough, you know it.

Isid. A common trick of gratitude, my lord,
Seeking to ease her own full heart——

Ord. Enough !

A debt repaid ceases to be a debt.

You have it in your power to serve me greatly.

Isid. And how, my lord ? I pray you will name the
thing.

I would climb up an ice-glazed precipice
To pluck a weed you fancied !

Ord. [*with embarrassment and hesitation.*] Why—
that—lady—

Isid. 'Tis now three years, my lord, since last I saw you:
Have you a son, my lord ?

Ord. O miserable— [*Aside.*

Isidore ! you are a man, and know mankind.

I told you what I wished—now for the truth—
She loved the man you killed.

Isid. [*looking as suddenly alarmed.*] You jest, my
lord ?

Ord. And till his death is proved she will not wed me.

Isid. You sport with me, my lord ?

Ord. Come, come ! this foolery

Lives only in thy looks, thy heart disowns it !

Isid. I can bear this, and anything more grievous
From you, my lord—but how can I serve you here ?

Ord. Why, you can utter with a solemn gesture
Oracular sentences of deep no-meaning,
Wear a quaint garment, make mysterious antics—
Isid. I am dull, my lord! I do not comprehend
you.

Ord. In blunt terms, you can play the sorcerer.
She hath no faith in Holy Church, 'tis true!
Her lover schooled her in some newer nonsense;
Yet still a tale of spirits works upon her.
She is alone enthusiast, sensitive,
Shivers, and can not keep the tears in her eye:
And such do love the marvellous too well
Not to believe it. We will wind up her fancy
With a strange music, that she knows not of—
With fumes of frankincense, and mummery,
Then leave, as one sure token of his death,
That portrait, which from off the dead man's neck
I bade thee take, the trophy of thy conquest.

Isid. Will that be a sure sign!

Ord. Beyond suspicion.
Fondly carressing him, her favourite lover
(By some base spell he had bewitched her senses),
She whispered such dark fears of me forsooth,
As made this heart pour gall into my veins.
And as she coyly bound it round his neck
She made him promise silence; and now holds
The secret of the existence of this portrait
Known only to her lover and herself.
But I had traced her, stolen unnotic'd on them,
And unsuspected saw and heard the whole.

Isid. But now I should have cursed the man who
told me
You could ask aught, my lord, and I refuse—
But this I can not do.

Ord. Where lies your scruple ?

Isid. [*with stammering.*] Why—why, my lord !
You know you told me that the lady loved you,
Had loved you with incautious tenderness ;
That if the young man, her betrothed husband,
Returned, yourself, and she, and the honour of both
Must perish. Now though with no tenderer scruples
Than those which being native to the heart,
Than those, my lord, which merely being a man——

Ord. [*aloud, though to express his contempt he speaks
in the third person.*] This fellow is a man—he
killed for hire

One whom he knew not, yet has tender scruples !
[*Then turning to ISIDORE.*] These doubts, these fears,
thy whine, thy stammering—
Pish, fool ! thou blund'rest through the book of guilt,
Spelling thy villainy.

Isid. My lord—my lord,
I can bear much—yes, very much from you !
But there's a point where sufferance is meanness :
I am no villain—never killed for hire—
My gratitude——

Ord. O aye—your gratitude !
'Twas a well-sounding word—what have you done with
it ?

Isid. Who proffers his past favours for my virtue——

Ord. [*with bitter scorn.*] Virtue——

Isid. Tries to o'erreach me—is a very sharper,
And should not speak of gratitude, my lord.
I knew not 'twas your brother !

Ord. [*alarmed.*] And who told you ?

Isid. He himself told me.

Ord. Ha ! you talked with him !
And those, the two Morescoes who were with you ?

Isid. Both fell in a night-brawl at Malaga.

Ord. [*in a low voice.*] My brother——

Isid. Yes, my lord, I could not tell you !

I thrust away the thought—it drove me wild.

But listen to me now—I pray you listen——

Ord. Villain ! no more. I'll hear no more of it.

Isid. My lord, it much imports your future safety
That you should hear it.

Ord. [*turning off from ISIDORE.*] Am not I a man !
'Tis as it should be ! tut—the deed itself

Was idle, and these after-pangs still idler !

Isid. We met him in the very place you mentioned.
Hard by a grove of firs——

Ord. Enough—enough——

Isid. He fought us valiantly, and wounded all ;
In fine, compelled a parley.

Ord. [*sighing, as if lost in thought.*] Alvar ! brother !

Isid. He offered me his purse——

Ord. [*with eager suspicion.*] Yes !

Isid. [*indignantly.*] Yes—I spurned it.—

He promised us I know not what—in vain !

Then with a look and voice that overawed me,

He said, What mean you, friends ? My life is dear,

I have a brother and a promised wife,

Who make life dear to me—and if I fall,

That brother will roam earth and hell for vengeance.

There was a likeness in his face to yours ;

I asked his brother's name : he said—Ordonio,

Son of Lord Valdez ! I had well-nigh fainted.

At length I said (if that indeed I said it,

And that no spirit made my tongue its organ),

That woman is dishonoured by that brother,

And he the man who sent us to destroy you.

He drove a thrust at me in rage. I told him.

He wore her portrait round his neck. He looked
 As he had been made of the rock that propt his back—
 Ay, just as you look now—only less ghastly !
 At length recovering from his trance, he threw
 His sword away, and bade us take his life,
 It was not worth his keeping.

Ord. And you killed him ?
 Oh, bloodhounds ! may eternal wrath flame round you !
 He was his Maker's image undefaced ! *[A pause.]*
 It seizes me—by Hell I will go on !
 What—would'st thou stop, man ? thy pale looks won't
 save thee ! *[A pause.]*

Oh, cold—cold—cold ! shot through with icy cold !
Isid. *[aside.]* Were he alive he had returned ere
 now,

The consequence the same—dead thro' his plotting !
Ord. O this unutterable dying away—here—
 This sickness of the heart ! *[A pause.]*

What if I went
 And lived in a hollow tomb, and fed on weeds ?
 Ay ! that's the road to heaven ! O fool ! fool ! fool !
[A pause.]

What have I done but that which nature destined,
 Or the blind elements stirred up within me ?
 If good were meant, why were we made these beings ?
 And if not meant—

Isid. You are disturbed, my lord !
Ord. *[starts, looks at him wildly ; then, after a pause
 during which his features are forced into a smile.]*
 A gust of the soul ! i'faith it overset me.

O 'twas all folly—all ! idle as laughter !
 Now, Isidore ! I swear that thou shalt aid me.

Isid. *[in a low voice.]* I'll perish first !
Ord. What dost thou mutter of ?

Isid. Some of your servants know me, I am certain.

Ord. There's some sense in that scruple; but we'll mask you.

Isid. They'll know my gait: but stay! last night I watched

A stranger near the ruin in the wood,
Who as it seemed was gathering herbs and wild flowers.
I had followed him at distance, seen him scale
Its western wall, and by an easier entrance
Stole after him unnoticed. There I marked,
That mid the chequer work of light and shade
With curious choice he plucked no other flowers
But those on which the moonlight fell: and once
I heard him muttering o'er the plant. A wizard—
Some gaunt slave prowling here for dark employment.

Ord. Doubtless you questioned him?

Isid. 'Twas my intention,
Having first traced him homeward to his haunt.
But lo! the stern Dominican, whose spies
Lurk everywhere, already (as it seemed)
Had given commission to his apt familiar
To seek and sound the Moor; who now returning,
Was by this trusty agent stopped midway.
I, dreading fresh suspicion if found near him
In that lone place, again concealed myself;
Yet within hearing. So the Moor was questioned,
And in your name, as lord of this domain,
Proudly he answered, "Say to the Lord Ordonio,
He that can bring the dead to life again!"

Ord. A strange reply!

Isid. Ay, all of him is strange.
He called himself a Christian, yet he wears
The Moorish robes, as if he courted death.

Ord. Where does this wizard live?

Isid. [*pointing to the distance.*] You see that brooklet ?
Trace its course backward : thro' a narrow opening
It leads you to the place.

Ord. How shall I know it ?

Isid. You cannot err. It is a small green dell
Built all around with high off-sloping hills,
And from its shape our peasants aptly call it
The Giant's Cradle. There's a lake in the midst,
And round its banks tall wood that branches over,
And makes a kind of faery forest grow
Down in the water. At the further end
A puny cataract falls on the lake ;
And there, a curious sight ! you see its shadow
For ever curling, like a wreath of smoke,
Up through the foliage of those faery trees.
His cot stands opposite. You cannot miss it.

Ord. [*in retiring stops suddenly at the edge of the scene,
and then turning round to ISIDORE.*] Ha !—
Who lurks there ? Have we been overheard ?
There where the smooth high wall of slate-rock
glitters—

Isid. 'Neath those tall stones, which propping each
the other,
Form a mock portal with their pointed arch ?
Pardon my smiles ! 'Tis a poor idiot boy,
Who sits in the sun, and twirls a bough about,
His weak eyes seeth'd in most unmeaning tears.
And so he sits, swaying his cone-like head,
And, staring at his bough from morn to sun-set,
See-saws his voice in inarticulate noises.

Ord. 'Tis well ! and now for this same wizard's lair.

Isid. Some three strides up the hill, a mountain ash
Stretches its lower boughs and scarlet clusters
O'er the old thatch.

Ord.

I shall not fail to find it.

[*Exeunt* ORDONIO and ISIDORE.]

SCENE II.—*The inside of a Cottage, around which flowers and plants of various kinds are scen.—Discovers ALVAR, ZULIMEZ, and ALHADRA, as on the point of leaving.*

Alh. [*addressing ALVAR.*] Farewell then ! and though
many thoughts perplex me,
Aught evil or ignoble never can I
Suspect of thee ! If what thou seem'st thou art,
The oppressed brethren of thy blood have need
Of such a leader.

Alv. Nobly minded woman !
Long time against oppression have I fought,
And for the native liberty of faith
Have bled and suffered bonds. Of this be certain :
Time, as he courses onward, still unrolls
The volume of concealment. In the future,
As in the optician's glassy cylinder,
The indistinguishable blots and colours
Of the dim past collect and shape themselves,
Upstarting in their own completed image
To scare or to reward.

I sought the guilty,
And what I sought I found : but ere the spear
Flew from my hand, there rose an angel form
Betwixt me and my aim. With baffled purpose
To the Avenger I leave vengeance, and depart !

Whate'er betide, if aught my arm may aid,
Or power protect, my word is pledged to thee :

For many are thy wrongs, and thy soul noble.
Once more, farewell.

[Exit ALHADRA.]

Yes, to the Belgic states
We will return. These robes, this stained complexion,
Akin to falsehood, weigh upon my spirit.
Whate'er befall us, the heroic Maurice
Will grant us an asylum, in remembrance
Of our past services.

Zul. And all the wealth, power, influence which is
yours,

You let a murderer hold ?

Alv. O faithful Zulimez !
That my return involved Ordonio's death,
I trust, would give me an unmingled pang,
Yet bearable—but when I see my father
Strewing his scant gray hairs, e'en on the ground,
Which soon must be his grave, and my Teresa—
Her husband proved a murderer, and her infants,
His infants—poor Teresa !—all would perish,
All perish—all ; and I (nay bear with me)
Could not survive the complicated ruin !

Zul. [*much affected.*] Nay now ! I have distressed you--
you well know,

I ne'er will quit your fortunes. True, 'tis tiresome :
You are a painter, one of many fancies !
You can call up past deeds, and make them live
On the blank canvas ! and each little herb,
That grows on mountain bleak, or tangled forest,
You have learnt to name—

Hark ! hear you not some footsteps !

Alv. What if it were my brother coming on-
wards ?

I sent a most mysterious message to him

Enter ORDONIO.

Alv. [*starting.*] It is he !

Ord. [*to himself as he enters.*] If I distinguished right
her gait and stature,

It was the Moorish woman, Isidore's wife,
That passed me as I entered. A lit taper,
In the night air, doth not more naturally
Attract the night-flies round it, than a conjuror
Draws round him the whole female neighbourhood.

[*Addressing* ALVAR.] You know my name, I guess, if
not my person.

I am Ordonio, son of the Lord Valdez.

Alv. [*with deep emotion.*] The son of Valdez !

[ORDONIO walks leisurely round the room, and
looks attentively at the plants.]

Zul. [*to* ALVAR.] Why, what ails you now ?
How your hand trembles ! Alvar, speak ! what wish
you ?

Alv. To fall upon his neck and weep forgiveness !

Ord. [*returning and aloud.*] Plucked in the moonlight
from a ruined abbey——

Those only, which the pale rays visited !
O the unintelligible power of weeds,
When a few odd prayers have been muttered o'er them :
Then they work miracles ! I warrant you,
There's not a leaf, but underneath it lurks
Some serviceable imp.

There's one of you
Hath sent me a strange message.

Alv. I am he.

Ord. With you, then, I am to speak :

[*Haughtily waving his hand to* ZULIMEZ.
And mark you, alone. [*Exit* ZULIMEZ.]

"He that can bring the dead to life again!"—
Such was your message, sir! You are no dullard,
But one that strips the outward rind of things!

Alv. 'Tis fabled that there are fruits with tempting
rinds,
That are all dust and rottenness within.
Would'st thou I should strip such?

Ord. Thou quibbling fool,
What dost thou mean? Think'st thou I journeyed hither
To sport with thee?

Alv. O no, my lord! to sport
Best suits the gaiety of innocence.

Ord [*aside.*] O what a thing is man! the wisest
heart

A fool! a fool that laughs at its own folly,
Yet still a fool. [*Looks round the cottage.*]

You are poor!

Alv. What follows thence?

Ord. That you would fain be richer.
The Inquisition, too—You comprehend me?
You are poor, in peril. I have wealth and power,
Can quench the flames, and cure your poverty;
And for the boon I ask of you but this,
That you should serve me—once—for a few hours.

Alv. [*solemnly.*] Thou art the son of Valdez! would
to Heaven
That I could truly and for ever serve thee.

Ord. The slave begins to soften [*aside*].

You are my friend,

"He that can bring the dead to life again;"

Nay, no defence to me! The holy brethren
Believe these calumnies—I know thee better.

[*Then with great bitterness.*] Thou art a man, and as a
man I'll trust thee!

Alv. [*aside.*] Alas ! this hollow mirth—Declare your business.

Ord. I love a lady, and she would love me
But for an idle and fantastic scruple.
Have you no servants here, no listeners ?

[*ORDONIO steps to the door.*]

Alv. What, faithless too ? False to his angel wife ?
To such a wife ? Well might'st thou look so wan,
Ill-starr'd Teresa !—Wretch ! my softer soul
Is pass'd away, and I will probe his conscience !

Ord. In truth this lady loved another man,
But he has perished.

Alv. What ! you killed him ? hey ?

Ord. I'll dash thee to the earth, if thou but think'st
it !

Insolent slave ! how dar'dst thou——

[*Turns abruptly from ALVAR and then to himself.*]

Why ! what's this ?

'Twas idiocy ! I'll tie myself to an aspen,
And wear a fool's cap——

Alv. [*watching his agitation.*] Fare thee well, Ordonio !
I pity thee, Ordonio, even to anguish.

[*ALVAR is retiring.*]

Ord. [*having recovered himself.*] Ho !

[*Calling to ALVAR.*]

Alv. Be brief, what wish you ?

Ord. You are deep at bartering—You charge yourself
At a round sum. Come, come, I spake unwisely.

Alv. I listen to you.

Ord. In a sudden tempest,
Did Alvar perish—he, I mean—the lover——
The fellow——

Alv. Nay, speak out ! 'twill ease your heart

To call him villain !—Why stand'st thou aghast ?
Men think it natural to hate their rivals.

Ord. [*hesitating.*] Now, till she knows him dead, she
will not wed me.

Alv. [*with eager vehemence.*] Are you not wedded,
then ? Merciful Heaven !

Not wedded to Teresa ?

Ord. Why, what ails thee ?

What, art thou mad ? why look'st thou upward so ?
Dost pray to Lucifer, Prince of the Air ?

Alv. [*recollecting himself.*] Proceed, I shall be silent.

[*ALVAR sits, and leaning on the table, hides his face.*]

Ord. To Teresa ?

Politic wizard ! ere you sent that message,
You had conned your lesson, made yourself proficient
In all my fortunes. Hah ! you prophesied
A golden crop ! Well, you have not mistaken—
Be faithful to me, and I'll pay thee nobly.

Alv. [*lifting up his head.*] Well ! and this lady !

Ord. If we could make her certain of his death,
She needs must wed me. Ere her lover left her,
She tied a little portrait round his neck,
Entreating him to wear it.

Alv. [*sighing.*] Yes ! he did so !

Ord. Why no : he was afraid of accidents,
Of robberies, and shipwrecks, and the like.
In secrecy he gave it me to keep
Till his return.

Alv. What ! he was your friend then ?

Ord. [*wounded and embarrassed.*] I was *his* friend.—

Now that he gave it me,

This lady knows not. You are a mighty wizard—
Can call the dead man up—he will not come—
He is in heaven then—there you have no influence,

Still there are tokens—and your imps may bring you
Something he wore about him when he died.
And when the smoke of the incense on the altar
Is passed, your spirits will have left this picture.
What say you now ?

Alv. [after a pause.] Ordonio, I will do it,

Ord. We'll hazard no delay. Be it to-night,
In the early evening. Ask for the Lord Valdez.
I will prepare him. Music too, and incense
(For I have arranged it—music, altar, incense),
All shall be ready. Here is this same picture,
And here, what you will value more, a purse.
Come early for your magic ceremonies.

Alv. I will not fail to meet you.

Ord. Till next we meet, farewell ! [Exit ORDONIO.]

Alv. [alone, indignantly flings the purse away, and gazes
passionately at the portrait.] And I did curse thee !

At midnight ! on my knees ! and I believed
Thee perjured, thee a traitress ! Thee dishonoured !
O blind and credulous fool ! O guilt of folly !
Should not thy inarticulate fondnesses,
Thy infant loves—should not thy maiden vows
Have come upon my heart ? And this sweet image
Tied round my neck with many a chaste endearment,
And thrilling hands, that made me weep and tremble—
Ah, coward dupe ! to yield it to the miscreant,
Who spake pollution of thee ! barter for life
This farewell pledge, which with impassioned vow
I had sworn that I would grasp—ev'n in my death-pang !

I am unworthy of thy love, Teresa,
Of that unearthly smile upon those lips,
Which ever smiled on me ! Yet do not scorn me—
I lisped thy name, ere I had learnt my mother's.

Dear portrait ! rescued from a traitor's keeping,
 I will not now profane thee, holy image,
 To a dark trick. That worst bad man shall find
 A picture, which will wake the hell within him,
 And rouse a fiery whirlwind in his conscience.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Hall of Armoury, with an altar at the back of the stage. Soft music from an instrument of glass or steel.*—VALDEZ, ORDONIO, and ALVAR in a Sorcerer's robe, are discovered.

Ord. This was too melancholy, father.

Val.

Nay,

My Alvar loved sad music from a child.
 Once he was lost ; and after weary search
 We found him in an open place in the wood,
 To which spot he had followed a blind boy,
 Who breathed into a pipe of sycamore
 Some strangely moving notes : and these, he said,
 Were taught him in a dream. Him we first saw
 Stretched on the broad top of a sunny heath-bank ;
 And lower down poor Alvar, fast asleep,
 His head upon the blind boy's dog. It pleased me
 To mark how he had fastened round the pipe
 A silver toy his grandam had late given him.
 Methinks I see him now as he then looked—
 Even so !—He had outgrown his infant dress,
 Yet still he wore it.

Alv. [*aside.*] My tears must not flow !
 I must not clasp his knees, and cry, My father !

Enter TERESA and attendants.

Ter. Lord Valdez, you have asked my presence here,
And I submit ; but (Heaven bear witness for me)
My heart approves it not ! 'tis mockery.

Ord. Believe you then no preternatural influence ?
Believe you not that spirits throng around us ?

Ter. Say rather that I have imagined it
A possible thing ; and it has soothed my soul
As other fancies have ; but ne'er seduced me
To traffic with the black and frenzied hope,
That the dead hear the voice of witch or wizard.

[*To ALVAR.*] Stranger, I mourn and blush to see you
here,
On such employment ! With far other thoughts
I left you.

Ord. [*aside.*] Ha ! he has been tampering with her !

Alv. O high-souled maiden ! and more dear to me
Than suits the stranger's name !—

I swear to thee.

I will uncover all concealed guilt.
Doubt, but decide not ! Stand ye from the altar.

[*Here a strain of music is heard from behind the scene.*]

Alv. With no irreverent voice or uncouth charm
I call up the departed !

Soul of Alvar !

Hear our soft suit, and heed my milder spell—
So may the gates of Paradise, unbarred,
Cease thy swift toils ! Since haply thou art one
Of that innumerable company
Who in broad circle, lovelier than the rainbow,
Girdle this round earth in a dizzy motion,
With noise too vast and constant to be heard—

Fitliest unheard ! For oh, ye numberless,
And rapid travellers ! what ear unstunned,
What sense unmaddened, might bear up against
The rushing of your congregated wings ?

Even now your living wheel turns o'er my head ! [*Music.*]

*[Music expressive of the movements and images
that follow.]*

Ye, as ye pass, toss high the desert sands,
That roar and whiten, like a burst of waters,
A sweet appearance, but a dread illusion
To the parched caravan that roams by night !
And ye upbuild on the becalmed waves
That whirling pillar, which from earth to heaven
Stands vast, and moves in blackness ! Ye too split
The ice mount ! and with fragments many and huge
Tempest the new-thawed sea, whose sudden gulfs
Suck in, perchance, some Lapland wizard's skiff !
Then round and round the whirlpool's marge ye dance,
Till from the blue swoln corse the soul toils out,
And joins your mighty army.

*[Here behind the scenes a voice sings the three words,
"Hear, sweet spirit."]*

Soul of Alvar !
Hear the mild spell, and tempt no blacker charm !
By sighs unquiet, and the sickly pang
Of a half dead, yet still undying hope,
Pass visible before our mortal sense !
So shall the Church's cleansing rites be thine,
Her knells and masses that redeem the dead !

SONG.

BEHIND THE SCENES, ACCOMPANIED BY THE SAME INSTRUMENT
AS BEFORE.

" Hear, sweet spirit, hear the spell,
Lest a blacker charm compel !
So shall the midnight breezes swell
With thy deep long-lingering knell.

And at evening evermore,
In a chapel on the shore,
Shall the chaunter, sad and saintly,
Yellow tapers burning faintly,
Doleful masses chaunt for thee,
Miserere Domine !

Hark ! the cadence dies away
On the quiet moonlight sea :
The boatmen rest their oars and say,
Miserere Domine ! "

[*A long pause.*

Ord. The innocent obey nor charm nor spell !
My brother is in Heaven. Thou sainted spirit,
Burst on our sight a passing visitant !
Once more to hear thy voice, once more to see thee,
O 'twere a joy to me !

Alv. A joy to thee !
What if thou heard'st him now ? What if his spirit
Re-entered its cold corse, and came upon thee
With many a stab from many a murderer's poniard ?
What if (his steadfast eye still beaming pity
And brother's love) he turned his head aside,
Lest he should look at thee, and with one look
Hurl thee beyond all power of penitence ?

Val. These are unholy fancies !
Ord. [*struggling with his feelings.*] Yes, my father,
He is in Heaven !

Alv. [*still to ORDONIO.*] But what if he had a brother,
Who had lived even so, that at his dying hour,
The name of Heaven would have convulsed his face,
More than the death-pang !

Val. Idly prating man !
Thou hast guessed ill : Don Alvar's only brother
Stands here before thee—a father's blessing on him !
He is most virtuous.

Alv. [*still to ORDONIO.*] What, if his very virtues
Had pampered his swoln heart and made him proud ?
And what if pride had duped him into guilt ?
Yet still he stalked a self-created god,
Not very bold, but exquisitely cunning ;
And one that at his mother's looking-glass
Would force his features to a frowning sternness ?
Young lord ! I tell thee, that there are such beings—
Yea, and it gives fierce merriment to the damned,
To see these most proud men, that loath mankind,
At every stir and buzz of coward conscience,
Trick, cant, and lie, most whining hypocrites !
Away, away ! Now let me hear more music.

[*Music again.*]

Ter. 'Tis strange, I tremble at my own conjectures !
But whatsoe'er it mean, I dare no longer
Be present at these lawless mysteries,
This dark provoking of the hidden Powers !
Already I affront—if not high Heaven—
Yet Alvar's memory !—Hark ! I make appeal
Against the unholy rite, and hasten hence
To bend before a lawful shrine, and seek
That voice which whispers, when the still heart listens.
Comfort and faithful hope ! Let us retire.

Alv. [*to TERESA anxiously.*] O full of faith and guile-
less love, thy spirit

Still prompts thee wisely. Let the pangs of guilt
Surprise the guilty : thou art innocent !

[*Exeunt TERESA and Attendants. Music as before.*
The spell is muttered—Come, thou wandering shape,
Who own'st no master in a human eye !
Whate'er be this man's doom, fair be it, or foul,
If he be dead, O come ! and bring with thee
That which he grasped in death ! But if he live,
Some token of his obscure perilous life.

[*The whole music clashes into a Chorus.*

CHORUS.

" Wandering demons hear the spell !
Lest a blacker charm compel "—

[*The incense on the altar takes fire suddenly, and an illuminated picture of ALVAR's assassination is discovered, and having remained a few seconds, is then hidden by ascending flames.*

Ord. [*starting in great agitation.*] Duped ! duped !
duped !—the traitor Isidore !

[*At this instant the doors are forced open, MONVIEDRO and the Familiars of the Inquisition, Servants, etc., enter and fill the stage.*

Mon. First seize the sorcerer ! suffer him not to speak !
The holy judges of the Inquisition
Shall hear his first words—Look you pale, Lord Valdez ?
Plain evidence have we here of most foul sorcery.
There is a dungeon underneath this castle,
And as you hope for mild interpretation,
Surrender instantly the keys and charge of it.

Ord. [*recovering himself as from stupor, to Servants.*]
Why haste you not ? Off with him to the dungeon !

[*All rush out in tumult.*

SCENE II.—*Interior of a Chapel with painted windows.*

Enter TERESA.

Ter. When first I entered this pure spot, forebodings
Pressed heavy on my heart : but as I knelt,
Such calm unwonted bliss possessed my spirit,
A trance so cloudless, that those sounds, hard by,
Of trampling uproar fell upon mine ear
As alien and unnoticed as the rain-storm
Beats on the roof of some fair banquet room,
While sweetest melodies are warbling—

Enter VALDEZ.

Val. Ye pitying saints, forgive a father's blindness,
And extricate us from this net of peril !

Ter. Who wakes anew my fears, and speaks of peril ?

Val. O best Teresa, wisely wert thou prompted
This was no feat of mortal agency !

That picture—O, that picture tells me all !
With a flash of light it came, in flames it vanished,
Self-kindled, self-consumed : bright as thy life,
Sudden and unexpected as thy fate,
Alvar ! My son ! my son !—The Inquisitor—

Ter. Torture me not ! But Alvar—Oh of Alvar ?

Val. How often would he plead for these Morescoes !
The brood accurst ! remorseless, coward murderers !

Ter. [*wildly.*] So ? so ?—I comprehend you—he is—

Val. [*with averted countenance.*] He is no more !

Ter. O sorrow ! that a father's voice should say this,
A father's heart believe it !

Val. A worse sorrow
Are fancy's wild hopes to a heart despairing !

Ter. These rays that slant in through those gorgeous windows

From yon bright orb—though coloured as they pass,
Are they not light?—Even so that voice, Lord Valdez !
Which whispers to my soul, though haply varied
By many a fancy, many a wishful hope,
Speaks yet the truth : and Alvar lives for me !

Val. Yes, for three wasting years, thus and no other,
He has lived for thee—a spirit for thy spirit !
My child, we must not give religious faith
To every voice which makes the heart a listener
To its own wish.

Ter. I breathed to the Unerring
Permitted prayers. Must those remain unanswered,
Yet impious sorcery, that holds no commune
Save with the lying spirit, claim belief ?

Val. O not to-day, not now for the first time
Was Alvar lost to thee—

[*Turning off, aloud, but as yet to himself.*] Accursed assassins !

Disarmed, o'erpowered, despairing of defence,
At his bared breast he seemed to grasp some relique
More dear than was his life—

Ter. [*with faint shriek.*] O Heavens ! my portrait !
And he *did* grasp it in his death pang !

Off, false demon,
That beat'st thy black wings close above my head !

[*ORDONIO enters with the keys of the dungeon in his hand.*

Hush ! who comes here ? The wizard Moor's employer !
Moors were his murderers, you say ? Saints shield us
From wicked thoughts—

[VALDEZ moves towards the back of the stage to meet ORDONIO, and during the concluding lines of TERESA'S speech appears as eagerly conversing with him.]

Is Alvar dead? what then?

The nuptial rites and funeral shall be one!

Here's no abiding-place for thee, Teresa.—

Away! they see me not—Thou seest me, Alvar!

To thee I bend my course.—But first one question,

One question to Ordonio.—My limbs tremble—

There I may sit unmarked—a moment will restore me.

[Retires out of sight.]

Ord. [as he advances with VALDEZ.] These are the
dungeon keys. Monviedro knew not

That I too had received the wizard's message,

"He that can bring the dead to life again."

But now he is satisfied I planned this scheme

To work a full conviction on the culprit,

And he entrusts him wholly to my keeping.

Val. 'Tis well, my son! but have you yet discovered—

(Where is Teresa?) what those speeches meant—

Pride, and hypocrisy, and guilt, and cunning?

Then when the wizard fixed his eye on you,

And you, I know not why, looked pale and trembled—

Why—why, what ails you now?—

Ord. [confused.] Me? what ails me?
A pricking of the blood—It might have happened

At any other time.—Why scan you me?

Val. His speech about the corse, and stabs and
murderers

Bore reference to the assassins—

Ord. Duped! duped! duped!

The traitor Isidore!

[A pause, then wildly.]

I tell thee, my dear father !

I am most glad of this.

Val. [confused.] True—sorcery
Merits its doom ; and this perchance may guide us
To the discovery of the murderers.
I have their statures and their several faces
So present to me, that but once to meet them
Would be to recognise.

Ord. Yes ! yes ! we recognise them.
I was benumbed, and staggered up and down
Through darkness without light—dark—dark—dark !
My flesh crept chill, my limbs felt manacled,
As had a snake coiled round them !—Now 'tis sunshine,
And the blood dances freely through its channels !

[Turns off abruptly ; then to himself.]
This is my virtuous, grateful Isidore !

[Then mimicking ISIDORE'S manner and voice.]
“ A common trick of gratitude, my lord ! ”
Old Gratitude ! a dagger would dissect
His “ own full heart ”—'twere good to see its colour.

Val. These magic sights ! O that I ne'er had yielded
To your entreaties ! Neither had I yielded,
But that in spite of your own seeming faith
I held it for some innocent stratagem,
Which love had prompted, to remove the doubts
Of wild Teresa—by fancies quelling fancies !

Ord. [in a slow voice, as reasoning to himself.]
Love ! love ! and then we hate ! and what ? and where-
fore ?

Hatred and love ! fancies opposed by fancies !
What, if one reptile sting another reptile ?
Where is the crime ? The goodly face of nature
Hath one disfiguring stain the less upon it.
Are we not all predestined transiency,

And cold dishonour? Grant it, that this hand
 Had given a morsel to the hungry worms
 Somewhat too early—Where's the crime of this?
 That this must needs bring on the idiocy
 Of moist-eyed penitence—'tis like a dream!

Val. Wild talk, my son! But thy excess of feeling—
 [Averting himself.]
 Almost I fear it hath unhinged his brain.

Ord. [now in soliloquy, and now addressing his father: and just after the speech has commenced, TERESA reappears and advances slowly.] Say, I had laid a body in the sun!

Well! in a month there swarm forth from a corse
 A thousand, nay, ten thousand sentient beings
 In place of that one man.—Say, I had killed him!
 [TERESA starts, and stops, listening,

Yet who shall tell me, that each one and all
 Of these ten thousand lives is not as happy
 As that one life, which being pushed aside,
 Made room for these unnumbered—

Val. O mere madness!
 [TERESA moves hastily forwards, and places herself directly before ORDONIO.]

Ord. [checking the feeling of surprise, and forcing his tones into an expression of playful courtesy.]
 Teresa? or the phantom of Teresa?

Ter. Alas! the phantom only, if in truth
 The substance of her being, her life's life,
 Have ta'en its flight through Alvar's death-wound—
 [A pause
 Where—

(Even coward murder grants the dead a grave)
 O tell me, Valdez!—answer me, Ordonio!
 Where lies the corse of my betrothed husband?

Ord. There, where Ordonio likewise would fain lie !
In the sleep-compelling earth, in unpierced darkness !
For while we live—
An inward day that never, never sets,
Glares round the soul, and mocks the closing eyelids !

Over his rocky grave the fir-grove sighs
A lulling ceaseless dirge ! 'Tis well with him.

*[Strides off in agitation towards the altar, but
returns as VALDEZ is speaking.]*

Ter. *[recoiling, with the expression appropriate to the
passion.]* The rock ! the fir-grove !

[To VALDEZ.] Did'st thou hear him say it ?
Hush ! I will ask him !

Val. Urge him not—not now.
These we beheld. Nor he nor I know more,
Than what the magic imagery revealed.

The assassin, who pressed foremost of the three—

Ord. A tender-hearted, scrupulous, grateful villain,
Whom I will strangle !

Val. *[looking with anxious disquiet at his son, yet
attempting to proceed with his description.]*

While his two companions—

Ord. Dead ! dead already ! what care we for the dead ?

Val. *[to TERESA.]* Pity him ! soothe him ! disenchant
his spirit !

These supernatural shows, this strange disclosure,
And this too fond affection, which still broods
O'er Alvar's fate, and still burns to avenge it—
These strugglings with his hopeless love for you,
Distemper him, and give reality
To the creatures of his fancy.

Ord. Is it so ?
Yes ! yes ! even like a child, that too abruptly

Roused by a glare of light from deepest sleep
Starts up bewildered and talks idly.

[*Then mysteriously.*] Father !

What if the Moors that made my brother's grave,
Even now were digging ours ? What if the bolt,
Though aimed, I doubt not, at the son of Valdez,
Yet missed its true aim when it fell on Alvar ?

Val. Alvar ne'er fought against the Moors—say rather,
He was their advocate ; but you had marched
With fire and desolation through their villages.—
Yet he by chance was captured.

Ord. Unknown, perhaps,
Captured, yet as the son of Valdez, murdered.
Leave all to me. Nay, whither, gentle lady ?

Val. What seek you now ?

Ter. A better, surer light
To guide me—

Both Val. and Ord. Whither ?

Ter. To the only place
Where life yet dwells for me, and ease of heart.
These walls seem threatening to fall in upon me !
Detain me not ! a dim power drives me hence,
And that will be my guide.

Val. To find a lover !
Suits that a high-born maiden's modesty ?
O folly and shame ! Tempt not my rage, Teresa !

Ter. Hopeless, I fear no human being's rage.
And am I hastening to the arms—O Heaven !
I haste but to the grave of my beloved !

[*Exit, VALDEZ following after her.*]

Ord. This, then, is my reward ! and I must love her ?
Scorned ! shuddered at ! yet love her still ? yes ! yes !
By the deep feelings of revenge and hate
I will still love her—woo her—win her too ! [*A pause.*]

Isidore safe and silent, and the portrait
Found on the wizard—he, belike, self-poisoned
To escape the crueller flames—My soul shouts triumph !
The mine is undermined ! blood ! blood ! blood !
They thirst for thy blood ! thy blood, Ordonio !

[*A pause.*]

The hunt is up ! and in the midnight wood
With lights to dazzle, and with nets they seek
A timid prey : and lo ! the tiger's eye
Glares in the red flame of his hunter's torch !

To Isidore I will despatch a message,
And lure him to the cavern ! aye, that cavern !
He cannot fail to find it. Thither I'll lure him,
Whence he shall never, never more return !

[*Looks through the side window.*]

A rim of the sun lies yet upon the sea,
And now 'tis gone ! All shall be done to-night. [*Exit.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Cavern, dark, except where a gleam of moonlight is seen on one side at the further end of it ; supposed to be cast on it from a crevice in a part of the cavern out of sight.*—ISIDORE alone, an extinguished torch in his hand.

Isid. Faith 'twas a moving letter—very moving !
“ His life in danger, no place safe but this !
’Twas his turn now to talk of gratitude.”
And yet—but no ! there can't be such a villain.
It can not be !

Thanks to that little crevice,
Which lets the moonlight in ! I'll go and sit by it.

To peep at a tree, or see a he-goat's beard,
 Or hear a cow or two breathe loud in their sleep—
 Anything but this crash of water drops !
 These dull abortive sounds that fret the silence
 With puny thwartings and mock opposition !
 So beats the death-watch to a sick man's ear.

[He goes out of sight, opposite to the patch of moonlight : returns after a minute's elapse in an ecstasy of fear.]

A hellish pit ! The very same I dreamt of !
 I was just in—and those damned fingers of ice
 Which clutched my hair up ! Ha !—what's that—it moved.

[ISIDORE stands staring at another recess in the cavern. In the meantime ORDONIO enters with a torch, and halloes to ISIDORE.]

Isid. I swear that I saw something moving there.
 The moonshine came and went like a flash of lightning—
 I swear I saw it move.

Ord. *[Goes into the recess, then returns, and with great scorn.]*

A jutting clay stone
 Drops on the long lank weed, that grows beneath :
 And the weed nods and drips.

Isid. *[forcing a laugh faintly.]* A jest to laugh at !
 It was not that which scared me, good my lord.

Ord. What scared you, then ?

Isid. You see that little rift ?
 But first permit me !

[Lights his torch at ORDONIO's, and while lighting it (A lighted torch in the hand

*Is no unpleasant object here—one's breath
 Floats round the flame, and makes as many colours
 As the thin clouds that travel near the moon.)*

You see that crevice there ?
 My torch extinguished by these water drops,
 And marking that the moonlight came from thence,
 I stepped in to it, meaning to sit there ;
 But scarcely had I measured twenty paces—
 My body bending forward, yea, o'erbalanced
 Almost beyond recoil, on the dim brink
 Of a huge chasm I stepped. The shadowy moonshine
 Filling the void so counterfeited substance,
 That my foot hung aslant adown the edge.
 Was it my own fear ?

Fear too hath its instincts !

(And yet such dens as these are wildly told of,
 And there are beings that live, yet not for the eye)—
 An arm of frost above and from behind me
 Plucked up and snatched me backward. Merciful
 Heaven !

You smile ! alas, even smiles look ghastly here !
 My lord, I pray you, go yourself and view it.

Ord. It must have shot some pleasant feelings through
 you.

Isid. If every atom of a dead man's flesh
 Should creep, each one with a particular life,
 Yet all as cold as ever—'twas just so !
 Or had it drizzled needle points of frost
 Upon a feverish head made suddenly bald——

Ord. [*interrupting him.*] Why, Isidore,
 I blush for thy cowardice. It might have startled,
 I grant you, even a brave man for a moment—
 But such a panic——

Isid. When a boy, my lord !
 I could have sate whole hours beside that chasm,
 Pushed in huge stones and heard them strike and rattle
 Against its horrid sides : then hung my head

Low down, and listened till the heavy fragments
Sank with faint crash in that still groaning well,
Which never thirsty pilgrim blest, which never
A living thing came near—unless, perchance,
Some blind-worm battens on the ropy mould
Close at its edge.

Ord. Art thou more coward now ?

Isid. Call him that fears his fellow-man a coward !
I fear not man—but this inhuman cavern,
It were too bad a prison-house for goblins.
Beside (you'll smile, my lord, but true it is)
My last night's sleep was very sorely haunted
By what had passed between us in the morning.
O sleep of horrors ! Now run down and stared at
By forms so hideous that they mock remembrance—
Now seeing nothing and imagining nothing,
But only being afraid—stifled with fear !
While every goodly or familiar form
Had a strange power of breathing terror round me !
I saw you in a thousand fearful shapes ;
And I entreat your lordship to believe me,
In my last dream——

Ord. Well ?

Isid. I was in the act
Of falling down that chasm, when Alhadra
Waked me : she heard my heart beat.

Ord. Strange enough ?
Had you been here before ?

Isid. Never, my lord !
But mine eyes do not see it now more clearly,
Than in my dream I saw—that very chasm.

Ord. [*stands lost in thought, then after a pause.*] I
know not why it should be ! yet it is——

Isid. What is, my lord ?

Ord. Abhorrent from our nature,
To kill a man.—

Isid. Except in self-defence.

Ord. Why, that's my case; and yet the soul recoils
from it—

'Tis so with me at least. But you, perhaps,
Have sterner feelings?

Isid. Something troubles you,
How shall I serve you? By the life you gave me,
By all that makes that life of value to me,
My wife, my babes, my honour, I swear to you,
Name it, and I will toil to do the thing,
If it be innocent! But this, my lord!
Is not a place where you could perpetrate,
No, nor propose a wicked thing. The darkness,
When ten strides off we know 'tis cheerful moonlight,
Collects the guilt, and crowds it round the heart.
It must be innocent.

[ORDONIO darkly, and in the feeling of self-
justification, tells what he conceives of his own
character and actions, speaking of himself in
the third person.

Ord. Thyself be judge.
One of our family knew this place well.

Isid. Who? when? my lord?

Ord. What boots it who or when?
Hang up thy torch—I'll tell his tale to thee.

[They hang up their torches on some ridge in the cavern.
He was a man different from other men,
And he despised them, yet revered himself.

Isid. [aside.] He? He despised? Thou'rt speaking of
thyself!
I am on my guard however: no surprise.

[Then to ORDONIO.]

What, he was mad?

Ord. All men seemed mad to him !
Nature had made him for some other planet,
And pressed his soul into a human shape
By accident or malice. In this world
He found no fit companion.

Isid. Of himself he speaks. [*Aside.*]
Alas ! poor wretch !

Mad men are mostly proud.

Ord. He walked alone,
And phantom thoughts unsought-for troubled him.
Something within would still be shadowing out
All possibilities ; and with these shadows
His mind held dalliance. Once, as so it happened,
A fancy crossed him wilder than the rest :
To this in moody murmur and low voice
He yielded utterance, as some talk in sleep :
The man who heard him.—

Why didst thou look round ?

Isid. I have a prattler three years old, my lord !
In truth he is my darling. As I went
From forth my door, he made a moan in sleep—
But I am talking idly—pray proceed !
And what did this man ?

Ord. With this human hand
He gave a substance and reality
To that wild fancy of a possible thing.—
Well it was done !

[*Then very wildly.*] Why babblest thou of guilt ?
The deed was done, and it passed fairly off.
And he whose tale I tell thee—dost thou listen ?

Isid. I would, my lord, you were by my fireside,
I'd listen to you with an eager eye,

Though you began this cloudy tale at midnight,
But I do listen—pray proceed, my lord.

Ord. Where was I ?

Isid. He of whom you tell the tale——

Ord. Surveying all things with a quiet scorn,
Tamed himself down to living purposes,
The occupations and the semblances
Of ordinary men—and such he seemed !
But that same over-ready agent—he——

Isid. Ah ! what of him, my lord ?

Ord. He proved a traitor,
Betrayed the mystery to a brother traitor,
And they between them hatched a damned plot
To hunt him down to infamy and death.
What did the Valdez ? I am proud of the name
Since he dared to do it.—

[ORDONIO grasps his sword, and turns off from

ISIDORE, then after a pause returns.

Our links burn dimly.

Isid. A dark tale darkly finished ! Nay, my lord !
Tell what he did.

Ord. That which his wisdom prompted—
He made the traitor meet him in this cavern,
And here he killed the traitor.

Isid. No ! the fool !
He had not wit enough to be a traitor.

Poor thick-eyed beetle ! not to have foreseen
That he who gulled thee with a whimpered lie,
To murder his own brother, would not scruple
To murder thee, if e'er his guilt grew jealous,
And he could steal upon thee in the dark !

Ord. Thou wouldst not then have come, if——

Isid. O yes, my lord !
I would have met him armed, and scared the coward.

[ISIDORE *throws off his robe; shows himself armed, and draws his sword.*

Ord. Now this is excellent and warms the blood !
My heart was drawing back, drawing me back
With weak and womanish scruples. Now my vengeance
Beckons me onwards with a warrior's mien,
And claims that life, my pity robbed her of.—
Now will I kill thee, thankless slave, and count it
Among my comfortable thoughts hereafter.

Isid. And all my little ones fatherless—

Die thou first.

[*They fight, ORDONIO disarms ISIDORE, and in disarming him throws his sword up that recess opposite to which they were standing. ISIDORE hurries into the recess with his torch, ORDONIO follows him; a loud cry of "Traitor! Monster!" is heard from the cavern, and in a moment ORDONIO returns alone.*

Ord. I have hurled him down the chasm ! treason for treason.

He dreamt of it : henceforward let him sleep,
A dreamless sleep, from which no wife can wake him,
His dream too is made out—Now for his friend.

[*Exit ORDONIO.*

SCENE II.—*The interior Court of a Saracenic or Gothic Castle, with the iron gate of a dungeon visible.*

Ter. Heart-chilling superstition ! thou canst glaze
Ev'n pity's eye with her own frozen tear.
In vain I urge the tortures that await him :
Even Selma, reverend guardian of my childhood,

My second mother, shuts her heart against me !
 Well, I have won from her what most imports
 The present need, this secret of the dungeon,
 Known only to herself.—A Moor ! a Sorcerer !
 No, I have faith, that nature ne'er permitted
 Baseness to wear a form so noble. True,
 I doubt not, that Ordonio had suborned him
 To act some part in some unholy fraud ;
 As little doubt, that for some unknown purpose
 He hath baffled his suborner, terror-struck him,
 And that Ordonio meditates revenge !
 But my resolve is fixed ! myself will rescue him.
 And learn if haply he knew aught of Alvar.

Enter VALDEZ.

Val. Still sad ?—and gazing at the massive door
 Of that fell dungeon which thou ne'er hadst sight of,
 Save what, perchance, thy infant fancy shaped it.
 When the nurse stilled thy cries with unmeant threats.
 Now by my faith, girl ! this same wizard haunts thee !
 A stately man, and eloquent and tender—
 [*With a sneer.*] Who then need wonder if a lady sighs
 Even at the thought of what these stern Dominicans——

Ter. [*with solemn indignation.*] The horror of their
 ghastly punishments
 Doth so o'ertop the height of all compassion,
 That I should feel too little for mine enemy,
 If it were possible I could feel more,
 Even though the dearest inmates of our household
 Were doomed to suffer them. That such things are——

Val. Hush, thoughtless woman !

Ter. Nay, it wakes within me
 More than a woman's spirit.

Val. No more of this—
What if Monviedro or his creatures hear us !
I dare not listen to you.

Ter. My honoured lord,
These were my Alvar's lessons, and whene'er
I bend me o'er his portrait, I repeat them,
As if to give a voice to the mute image.

Val. — We have mourned for Alvar,
Of his sad fate there now remains no doubt.
Have I no other son ?

Ter. Speak not of him !
That low imposture ! That mysterious picture !
If this be madness, must I wed a madman ?
And if not madness, there is mystery,
And guilt doth lurk behind it.

Val. Is this well ?
Ter. Yes, it is truth : saw you his countenance ?
How rage, remorse, and scorn, and stupid fear
Displaced each other with swift interchanges ?
O that I had indeed the sorcerer's power. —
I would call up before thine eyes the image
Of my betrothed Alvar, of thy first-born !
His own fair countenance, his kingly forehead,
His tender smiles, love's day-dawn on his lips !
That spiritual and almost heavenly light
In his commanding eye—his mien heroic,
Virtue's own native heraldry ! to man
Genial, and pleasant to his guardian angel.
Whene'er he gladdened, how the gladness spread
Wide round him ! and when oft with swelling tears,
Flashed through by indignation, he bewailed
The wrongs of Belgium's martyred patriots,
Oh, what a grief was there—for joy to envy,
Or gaze upon enamoured !

O my father !

Recall that morning when we knelt together,
And thou didst bless our loves ! O even now,
Even now, my sire ! to thy mind's eye present him,
As at that moment he rose up before thee,
Stately, with beaming look ! Place, place beside him
Ordonio's dark perturbed countenance !
Then bid me (Oh thou couldst not), bid me turn
From him, the joy, the triumph of our kind !
To take in exchange that brooding man, who never
Lifts up his eye from the earth, unless to scowl.

Val. Ungrateful woman ! I have tried to stifle
An old man's passion ! was it not enough,
That thou hast made my son a restless man,
Banished his health, and half unhinged his reason ;
But that thou wilt insult him with suspicion !
And toil to blast his honour ? I am old,
A comfortless old man !

Ter. O grief ! to hear
Hateful entreaties from a voice we love !

Enter a Peasant and presents a letter to VALDEZ.

Val. [reading it.] "He dares not venture hither !"
Why, what can this mean ?

"Lest the Familiars of the Inquisition,
That watch around my gates, should intercept him ;
But he conjures me, that without delay
I hasten to him—for my own sake entreats me
To guard from danger him I hold imprisoned—
He will reveal a secret, the joy of which
Will even outweigh the sorrow."—Why, what can this
be ?

Perchance it is some Moorish stratagem,

To have in me a hostage for his safety.
 Nay, that they dare not ! Ho ! collect my servants !
 I will go thither—let them arm themselves.

[Exit VALDEZ.

Ter. [alone.] The moon is high in heaven, and all is
 hushed.

Yet, anxious listener ! I have seemed to hear
 A low dead thunder mutter thro' the night,
 As 'twas a giant angry in his sleep.

O Alvar ! Alvar ! that they could return
 Those blessed days that imitated heaven,
 When we two wont to walk at eventide ;
 When we saw nought but beauty ; when we heard
 The voice of that Almighty One who loved us
 In every gale that breathed, and wave that murmured !
 O we have listened, even till high-wrought pleasure
 Hath half assumed the countenance of grief,
 And the deep sigh seemed to heave up a weight
 Of bliss, that pressed too heavy on the heart. [A pause.
 And this majestic Moor, seems he not one
 Who, oft and long communing with my Alvar,
 Hath drunk in kindred lustre from his presence,
 And guides me to him with reflected light ?
 What if in yon dark dungeon coward treachery
 Be groping for him with envenomed poniard—
 Hence womanish fears, traitors to love and duty—
 I'll free him. [Exit TERESA.

SCENE III.—*The Mountains by Moonlight.*—ALHADRA
 alone in a Moorish dress.

Alh. Yon hanging woods, that touched by autumn
 seem

As they were blossoming hues of fire and gold ;
The flower-like woods, most lovely in decay,
The many clouds, the sea, the rock, the sands,
Lie in the silent moonshine : and the owl,
(Strange ! very strange !) the scritch-owl only wakes !
Sole voice, sole eye of all this world of beauty !
Unless, perhaps, she sing her screeching song
To a herd of wolves, that skulk athirst for blood.
Why such a thing am I ?—Where are these men ?
I need the sympathy of human faces,
To beat away this deep contempt for all things,
Which quenches my revenge. Oh ! would to Alla,
The raven, or the sea mew, were appointed
To bring me food ! or rather that my soul
Could drink in life from the universal air !
It were a lot divine in some small skiff
Along some Ocean's boundless solitude,
To float for ever with a careless course,
And think myself the only being alive !

My children !—Isidore's children !—Son of Valdez,
This bath new strung mine arm. Thou coward tyrant !
To stupify a woman's heart with anguish,
Till she forgot—even that she was a mother !

[She fixes her eye on the earth. Then drop in one after another, from different parts of the stage, a considerable number of Morescoes, all in Moorish garments and Moorish armour. They form a circle at a distance round ALHADRA, and remain silent till the second in command, NAOMI, enters, distinguished by his dress and armour, and by the silent obeisance paid to him on his entrance by the other Moors.]

Nao. Woman ! May Alla and the Prophet bless thee !
We have obey'd thy call. Where is our chief ?
And why didst thou enjoin these Moorish garments ?

Alh. [*raising her eyes, and looking round on the circle.*]
Warriors of Mahomet ! faithful in the battle !
My countrymen ! Come ye prepared to work
An honourable deed ? And would ye work it
In the slave's garb ! Curse on those Christian robes !
They are spell-blasted : and whoever wears them,
His arm shrinks withered, his heart melts away,
And his bones soften.

Nao. Where is Isidore ?

Alh. [*in a deep low voice.*] This night I went from forth
my house, and left
His children all asleep ; and he was living !
And I returned and found them still asleep,
But he had perished——

All Morescoes. Perished ?

Alh. He had perished !
Sleep on, poor babes ! not one of you doth know
That he is fatherless—a desolate orphan ;
Why should we wake them ? Can an infant's arm
Revenge his murder ?

One Moresco [*to another.*] Did she say his murder ?

Nao. Murder ? Not murdered ?

Alh. Murdered by a Christian !
[*They all at once draw their sabres.*]

Alh. [*to NAOMI, who advances from the circle.*]
Brother of Zagri ! fling away thy sword ;
This is thy chieftain's ! [*He steps forward to take it.*]
Dost thou dare receive it ?

For I have sworn by Alla and the Prophet,
No tear shall dim these eyes, this woman's heart
Shall heave no groan, till I have seen that sword

Wet with the life-blood of the son of Valdez !

[*A pause.*]

Ordonio was your chieftain's murderer !

Nao. He dies, by Alla !

All. [*kneeling.*] By Alla !

Alh. This night your chieftain armed himself,
And hurried from me. But I followed him
At distance, till I saw him enter—there.

Nao. The cavern ?

Alh. Yes, the mouth of yonder cavern.
After a while I saw the son of Valdez
Rush by with flaring torch ; he likewise entered.
There was another and a longer pause ;
And once, methought I heard the clash of swords !
And soon the son of Valdez re-appeared :
He flung his torch towards the moon in sport,
And seemed as he were mirthful ! I stood listening,
Impatient for the footsteps of my husband !

Nao. Thou called'st him ?

Alh. I crept into the cavern—
'Twas dark and very silent.

[*Then wildly.*] What saidst thou ?

No ! no ! I did not dare call, Isidore,
Lest I should hear no answer ! A brief while,
Belike, I lost all thought and memory
Of that for which I came ! After that pause,
O Heaven ! I heard a groan, and followed it :
And yet another groan, which guided me
Into a strange recess—and there was light,
A hideous light ! his torch lay on the ground ;
Its flame burnt dimly o'er a chasm's brink :
I spake ; and while I spake, a feeble groan
Came from that chasm ! it was his last ! his death-groan !

Nao. Comfort her, Alla !

Alh. I stood in unimaginable trance
 And agony that cannot be remembered,
 Listening with horrid hope to hear a groan !
 But I had heard his last : my husband's death-groan !
Nao. Haste ! let us onward.

Alh. I looked far down the pit—
 My sight was bounded by a jutting fragment :
 And it was stained with blood. Then first I shrieked,
 My eye-balls burnt, my brain grew hot as fire,
 And all the hanging drops of the wet roof
 Turned into blood—I saw them turn to blood !
 And I was leaping wildly down the chasm,
 When on the farther brink I saw his sword,
 And it said, Vengeance !—Curses on my tongue !
 The moon hath moved in Heaven, and I am here,
 And he hath not had vengeance ! Isidore !
 Spirit of Isidore ! thy murderer lives !
 Away ! away !

Alh. Away ! away !
[She rushes off, all following her.]

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Dungeon.*—ALVAR (*alone*) rises slowly
from a bed of reeds.

Alv. And this place my forefathers made for man !
 This is the process of our love and wisdom
 To each poor brother who offends against us—
 Most innocent, perhaps—and what if guilty ?
 Is this the only cure ! Merciful God !
 Each pore and natural outlet shrivelled up
 By ignorance and parching poverty,
 His energies roll back upon his heart

And stagnate and corrupt, till, changed to poison,
They break out on him, like a loathsome plague-spot !
Then we call in our pampered mountebanks—
And this is their best cure ! un comforted
And friendless solitude, groaning and tears
And savage faces, at the clanking hour,
Seen through the steam and vapours of his dungeon
By the lamp's dismal twilight ! So he lies
Circled with evil, till his very soul
Unmoulds its essence, hopelessly deformed
By sights of evermore deformity !—
With other ministrations thou, O Nature !
Healest thy wandering and distempered child :
Thou pourest on him thy soft influences,
Thy sunny hues, fair forms, and breathing sweets ;
Thy melodies of woods, and winds, and waters !
Till he relent, and can no more endure
To be a jarring and a dissonant thing
Amid this general dance and minstrelsy ;
But, bursting into tears, wins back his way,
His angry spirit healed and harmonised
By the benignant touch of love and beauty.
I am chill and weary ! Yon rude bench of stone,
In that dark angle, the sole resting-place !
But the self-approving mind is its own light,
And life's best warmth still radiates from the heart
Where love sits brooding, and an honest purpose.
[Retires out of sight.]

Enter TERESA with a taper.

Ter. It has chilled my very life—my own voice scares
me ;
Yet when I hear it not I seem to lose

The substance of my being—my strongest grasp
Sends inwards but weak witness that I am.
I seek to cheat the echo.—How the half sounds
Blend with this strangled light ! Is he not here—

[*Looking round.*

O for one human face here—but to see
One human face here to sustain me.—Courage !
It is but my own fear ! The life within me,
It sinks and wavers like this cone of flame,
Beyond which I scarce dare look onward ! Oh !

[*Shuddering.*

If I faint ? If this inhuman den should be
At once my death-bed and my burial vault ?

[*Faintly screams as ALVAR emerges from the recess.*

Alv. [*rushes towards her, and catches her as she is falling.*]

O gracious heaven ! it is, it is Teresa !
Shall I reveal myself ? The sudden shock
Of rapture will blow out this spark of life,
And joy complete what terror has begun.
O ye impetuous beatings here, be still !
Teresa, best beloved ! pale, pale, and cold !
Her pulse doth flutter ! Teresa ! my Teresa !

Ter. [*recovering, looks round wildly.*] I heard a voice ;
but often in my dreams

I hear that voice ! and wake and try—and try—
To hear it waking ! but I never could—
And 'tis so now—even so ! Well ! he is dead—
Murdered perhaps ! And I am faint, and feel
As if it were no painful thing to die !

Alv. [*eagerly.*] Believe it not, sweet maid ! Believe it
not,

Beloved woman ! 'Twas a low imposture
Framed by a guilty wretch.

Ter. [*retires from him, and feebly supports herself against a pillar of the dungeon.*] Ha ! Who art thou ?

Alv. [*exceedingly affected.*] Suborned by his brother—

Ter. Didst thou murder him ?

And dost thou now repent ? Poor troubled man,
I do forgive thee, and may Heaven forgive thee !

Alv. Ordonio—he——

Ter. If thou didst murder him—

His spirit ever at the throne of God
Asks mercy for thee—prays for mercy for thee,
With tears in Heaven !

Alv. Alvar was not murdered.

Be calm ! be calm, sweet maid !

Ter. [*wildly.*] Nay, nay, but tell me !

[*A pause, then presses her forehead.*

O 'tis lost again !

This dull confused pain—

[*A pause, she gazes at ALVAR.*

Mysterious man !

Methinks I can not fear thee : for thine eye
Doth swim with love and pity—Well ! Ordonio—
Oh my foreboding heart ! And he suborned thee,
And thou didst spare his life ? Blessings shower on thee,
As many as the drops twice counted o'er
In the fond faithful heart of his Teresa !

Alv. I can endure no more. The Moorish sorcerer
Exists but in the stain upon his face.
That picture——

Ter. [*advances towards him.*] Ha ! speak on !

Alv. Beloved Teresa !

It told but half the truth. O let this portrait

Tell all—that Alvar lives—that he is here !
Thy much deceived but ever faithful Alvar.

[*Takes her portrait from his neck, and gives it her.*

Ter. [*receiving the portrait.*] The same—it is the same.

Ah ! Who art thou ?

Nay, I will call thee, Alvar ! [*She falls on his neck.*

Alv.

O joy unutterable !

But hark ! a sound as of removing bars

At the dungeon's outer door. A brief, brief while

Conceal thyself, my love ! It is Ordonio.

For the honour of our race, for our dear father ;

O for himself too (he is still my brother)

Let me recall him to his nobler nature,

That he may wake as from a dream of murder !

O let me reconcile him to himself,

Open the sacred source of penitent tears,

And be once more his own beloved Alvar.

Ter. O my all virtuous love ! I fear to leave thee
With that obdurate man.

Alv.

Thou dost not leave me !

But a brief while retire into the darkness :

O that my joy could spread its sunshine round thee !

Ter. The sound of thy voice shall be my music !

[*Retiring, she returns hastily and embracing ALVAR.*

Alvar ! my Alvar ! am I sure I hold thee ?

Is it no dream ? thee in my arms, my Alvar ! [*Exit.*

[*A noise at the dungeon door. It opens, and
ORDONIO enters, with a goblet in his hand.*

Ord. Hail, potent wizard ! in my gayer mood

I poured forth a libation to old Pluto,

And as I brimmed the bowl, I thought on thee.

Thou hast conspired against my life and honour,

Hast tricked me foully ; yet I hate thee not.

Why should I hate thee ? this same world of ours,
 'Tis but a pool amid a storm of rain,
 And we the air bladders that course up and down,
 And joust and tilt in merry tournament ;
 And when one bubble runs foul of another,
 [*Waving his hand to ALVAR.*
 The weaker needs must break.

Alv. I see thy heart.
 There is a frightful glitter in thine eye
 Which doth betray thee. Inly-tortured man,
 This is the revelry of a drunken anguish,
 Which fain would scoff away the pang of guilt,
 And quell each human feeling.

Ord. Feeling ! feeling !
 The death of a man—the breaking of a bubble—
 'Tis true I cannot sob for such misfortunes ;
 But faintness, cold and hunger—curses on me
 If willingly I e'er inflicted them !
 Come, take the beverage ; this chill place demands it.
 [ORDONIO proffers the goblet.

Alv. Yon insect on the wall,
 Which moves this way and that its hundred limbs
 Were it a toy of mere mechanic craft,
 It were an infinitely curious thing !
 But it has life, Ordonio ! life, enjoyment !
 And by the power of its miraculous will
 Wields all the complex movements of its frame
 Unerringly to pleasurable ends !
 Saw I that insect on this goblet's brim
 I would remove it with an anxious pity !
Ord. What meanest thou ?

Alv. There's poison in the wine.
Ord. Thou hast guessed right ; there's poison in the
 wine.

There's poison in't—which of us two shall drink it ?
For one of us must die !

Alv. Whom dost thou think me ?

Ord. The accomplice and sworn friend of Isidore.

Alv. I know him not.

And yet, methinks, I have heard the name but lately.
Means he the husband of the Moorish woman ?
Isidore ? Isidore ?

Ord. Good ! good ! that lie ! by heaven it has restored
me.

Now I am thy master ! Villain ! thou shalt drink it
Or die a bitterer death.

Alv. What strange solution
Hast thou found out to satisfy thy fears,
And drug them to unnatural sleep ?

[*ALVAR takes the goblet, and throwing it to the
ground with stern contempt.*

My master !

Ord. Thou mountebank !

Alv. Mountebank and villain !
What then art thou ? For shame, put up thy sword !
What boots a weapon in a wither'd arm ?
I fix mine eye upon thee, and thou tremblest !
I speak, and fear and wonder crush thy rage,
And turn it to a motionless distraction !
Thou blind self-worshipper ! thy pride, thy cunning,
Thy faith in universal villainy,
Thy shallow sophisms, thy pretended scorn
For all thy human brethren—out upon them !
What have they done for thee ? have they given thee
peace ?

Cured thee of starting in thy sleep ? or made
The darkness pleasant when thou wak'st at midnight ?

Art happy when alone ! Can'st walk by thyself
With even step and quiet cheerfulness ?
Yet, yet thou mayst be saved——

Ord. [*vacantly repeating the words.*] Saved ? saved ?
Alv. One pang !

Could I call up one pang of true remorse !

Ord. He told me of the babes that prattled to him,
His fatherless little ones ! remorse ! remorse !
Where gott'st thou that fool's word ? Curse on remorse !
Can it give up the dead, or recompact
A mangled body ? mangled—dashed to atoms !
Not all the blessings of a host of angels
Can blow away a desolate widow's curse !
And though thou spill thy heart's blood for atonement,
It will not weigh against an orphan's tear !

Alv. [*almost overcome by his feelings.*] But Alvar——

Ord. Ha ! it chokes thee in the throat,
Even thee ; and yet I pray thee speak it out.
Still Alvar !—Alvar—howl it in mine ear !
Heap it like coals of fire upon my heart,
And shoot it hissing through my brain !

Alv. Alas !

That day when thou didst leap from off the rock
Into the waves, and grasped thy sinking brother,
And bore him to the strand ; then, son of Valdez,
How sweet and musical the name of Alvar !
Then, then, Ordonio, he was dear to thee,
And thou wert dear to him : Heaven only knows
How very dear thou wert ! Why didst thou hate him !
O heaven ! how he would fall upon thy neck,
And weep forgiveness !

Ord. Spirit of the dead !
Methinks I know thee ! ha ! my brain turns wild
At its own dreams !—off—off, fantastic shadow !

Alv. I fain would tell thee what I am, but dare not !

Ord. Cheat ! villain ! traitor ! whatsoever thou be—
I fear thee, man !

Ter. [*rushing out, and falling on ALVAR's neck.*]
Ordonio ! 'tis thy brother.

[*ORDONIO, with frantic wildness, runs upon ALVAR with his sword. TERESA flings herself on ORDONIO and arrests his arm.*

Stop, madman, stop !

Alv. Does then this thin disguise impenetrably
Hide Alvar from thee ? Toil and painful wounds
And long imprisonment in unwholesome dungeons,
Have marred, perhaps, all trait and lineament
Of what I was ! But chiefly, chiefly, brother,
My anguish for thy guilt !

Ordonio—brother !

Nay, nay, thou shalt embrace me.

Ord. [*drawing back, and gazing at ALVAR with a
countenance of at once awe and terror.*

Touch me not !

Touch not pollution, Alvar ! I will die.

[*He attempts to fall on his sword ; ALVAR and
TERESA prevent him.*

Alv. We will find means to save your honour. Live,
Oh, live, Ordonio ! for our father's sake !
Spare his gray hairs !

Ter. And you may yet be happy.

Ord. O horror ! not a thousand years in heaven
Could recompose this miserable heart,
Or make it capable of one brief joy !
Live ! live ! Why yes ! 'Twere well to live with you :

For is it fit a villain should be proud ?
My brother ! I will kneel to you, my brother !

[*Kneeling.*

Forgive me, Alvar !—Curse me with forgiveness !

Alv. Call back thy soul, Ordonio, and look round thee !
Now is the time for greatness ! Think that Heaven—

Ter. O mark his eye ! he hears not what you say.

Ord. [*pointing at the vacancy.*] Yes, mark his eye !
there's fascination in it !

Thou saidst thou didst not know him—That is he !
He comes upon me !

Alv. Heal, O heal him, Heaven !

Ord. Nearer and nearer ! and I can not stir !
Will no one hear these stifled groans, and wake me ?
He would have died to save me, and I killed him—
A husband and a father !—

Ter. Some secret poison

Drinks up his spirits !

Ord. [*fiercely recollecting himself.*] Let the eternal
justice

Prepare my punishment in the obscure world—
I will not bear to live—to live—O agony !
And be myself alone my own sore torment !

[*The doors of the dungeon are broken open, and in
rush ALHADRA and the band of Morescoes.*

Alh. Seize first that man !

[*ALVAR presses onward to defend ORDONIO.*

Ord. Off, ruffians ! I have flung away my sword,
Woman, my life is thine ! to thee I give it !
Off ! he that touches me with his hand of flesh,
I'll rend his limbs asunder ! I have strength
With this bare arm to scatter you like ashes.

Alh. My husband—

Ord. Yes, I murdered him most foully.

Alv. and Ter. O horrible !

Alh. Why didst thou leave his children ?

Demon, thou shouldst have sent thy dogs of hell
To lap their blood. Then, then I might have hardened
My soul in misery, and have had comfort.
I would have stood far off, quiet though dark,
And bade the race of men raise up a mourning
For a deep horror of desolation,
Too great to be one soul's particular lot !
Brother of Zagri ! let me lean upon thee.

[Struggling to suppress her feelings.]

The time is not yet come for woman's anguish,
I have not seen his blood—Within an hour
Those little ones will crowd around and ask me,
Where is our father ? I shall curse thee then !
Wert thou in heaven, my curse would pluck thee thence !

Ter. He doth repent ! See, see, I kneel to thee !

O let him live ! That aged man, his father—

Alh. *[sternly.]* Why had he such a son ?

[Shouts from the distance of "Rescue ! Rescue ! ALVAR !

ALVAR !" and the voice of VALDEZ heard.

Rescue ?—and Isidore's spirit unavenged ?—

The deed be mine ! *[Suddenly stabs ORDONIO.]*

Now take my life !

Ord. *[staggering from the wound.]* Atonement !

Alv. *[while with TERESA supporting ORDONIO.]*

Arm of avenging Heaven,

Thou hast snatched from me my most cherished hope—
But go ! my word was pledged to thee.

Ord. Away !

Brave not my father's rage ! I thank thee ! Thou—

[Then turning his eyes languidly to ALVAR.]

She hath avenged the blood of Isidore !
I stood in silence like a slave before her
That I might taste the wormwood and the gall,
And satiate this self-accusing heart
With bitterer agonies than death can give.
Forgive me, Alvar !

Oh !—couldst thou forget me ! [*Dies.*

[*ALVAR and TERESA bend over the body of ORDONIO.*

Alh. [*to the Moors.*] I thank thee, Heaven ! thou hast
ordained it wisely,

That still extremes bring their own cure. That point
In misery, which makes the oppressed man
Regardless of his own life, makes him too
Lord of the oppressor's—Knew I a hundred men
Despairing, but not palsied by despair,
This arm should shake the kingdoms of the world ;
The deep foundations of iniquity
Should sink away, earth groaning from beneath them ;
The strongholds of the cruel men should fall,
Their temples and their mountainous towers should fall ;
Till desolation seemed a beautiful thing,
And all that were and had the spirit of life,
Sang a new song to her who had gone forth,
Conquering and still to conquer !

[*ALHADRA hurries off with the Moors ; the stage
fills with armed Peasants and Servants,
ZULIMEZ and VALDEZ at their head.
VALDEZ rushes into ALVAR's arms.*

Alv. Turn not thy face that way, my father ! hide,
Oh hide it from his eye ! Oh let thy joy
Flow in unmingled stream through thy first blessing.

[*Both kneel to VALDEZ.*

Val. My son ! My Alvar ! bless, oh bless him,
Heaven !

Ter. Me too, my Father ?

Val.

Bless, oh, bless my children !

[*Both rise.*]

Alv. Delights so full, if unalloyed with grief,
Were ominous. In these strange dread events
Just heaven instructs us with an awful voice,
That Conscience rules us e'en against our choice.
Our inward monitress to guide or warn,
If listened to ; but if repelled with scorn,
At length as dire Remorse, she reappears,
Works in our guilty hopes, and selfish fears !
Still bids Remember ! and still cries, Too late !
And while she scares us, goads us to our fate.



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